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Hanoi party leader to resign

HANOI (AP) — Vietnamese Communist Party Secretary-General Nguyen Van Lanh will resign at a forthcoming party meeting, Vietnamese officials said Tuesday. Lanh, 74, has been ill since late October, would step down from the party's top post for health reasons at a plenary of the central committee. They said the meeting would be held within two months. "He is too old. There will be a party plenary after the (Vietnamese) New Year," said Doi Thi, deputy chief editor of the Communist Party daily Nhan Dan. He said Nguyen's successor would be decided then. The three-day set holiday starts January 27. One Eastern European diplomat said "He has to step down because of his health. If they want to make the Communist Party stronger they need another leader." Vietnamese officials in Hanoi said Lanh, hailed as a reformer in the midst of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev when he was elected party general-secretary in late 1986, has been ill since catching a severe cold during a visit to East Germany last October.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Arab Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الفلسطينية للصحافة والاعلام

PLO rebels offer reunification

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syrian-backed Palestinian dissidents are considering a proposal for reuniting with Yasser Arafat's mainstream Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) after a seven-year feud, a senior official said Wednesday. Khalid Fakhour, chairman of the Palestine National Salvation Front, a loose coalition of dissidents who had sought Arafat's ouster as PLO chairman, said: "I have presented an initiative to reconcile all Palestinian factions under the PLO." He told reporters the three leaders of the FNSF groups — Saed Mousa of the self-styled Fatah-Uprising; Ahmad Jibril of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command; and Issam Kad, head of Salqa — "have agreed to study my proposal and give me their replies as soon as possible." Salqa and the FPLP-GC have been suspended from the PLO which groups seven other factions. The FPLP-GC has been blamed for the mid-air explosion of the Pan Am jumbo jet over Scotland in December 1988, in which 270 people were killed. Jibril, a former Syrian army captain backed by Libya, has denied the charge. Fakhour did not disclose details of his initiative.

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Hamas leader goes on trial

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — The wheel-chair-bound leader of the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas movement went on trial in a military court Wednesday and relatives of a slain Israeli soldier shrieking curses at him. Sheikh Ahmad Ismail Yassin, 54, was charged with 15 offences, including belonging to an illegal organisation, organising attacks on civilians and causing the deaths of two Israeli soldiers, Ilan Saadon and Avi Sassportaz.

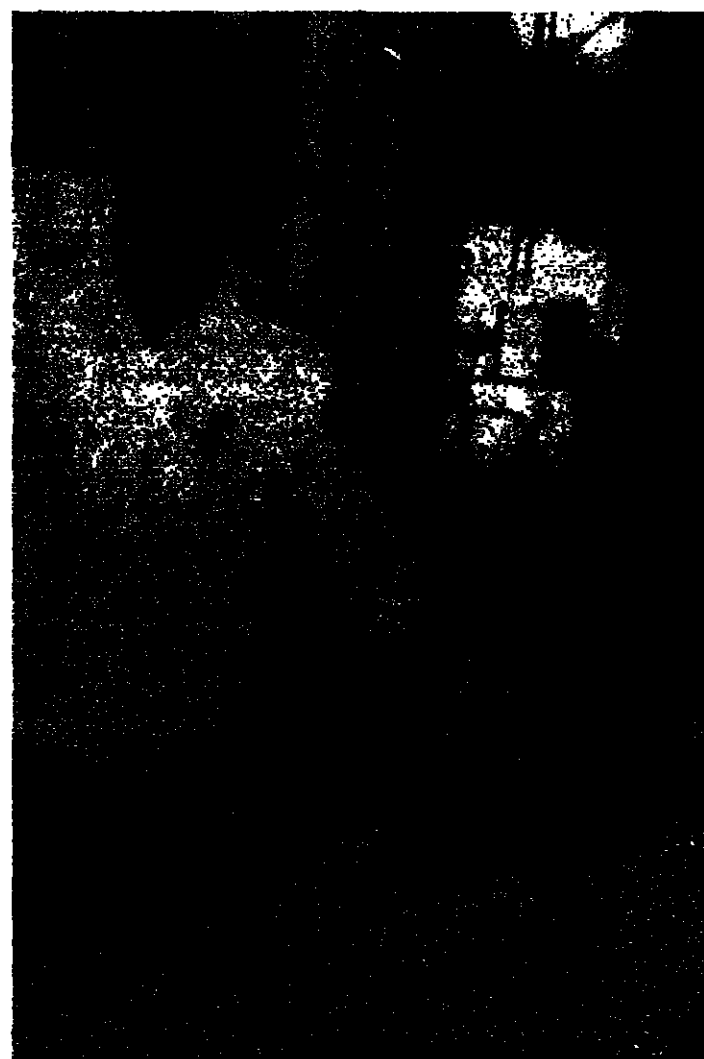
Yassin's lawyers told the court that they will contest several points in the charges. They were granted an indefinite postponement after requesting time to study the charges fully. Israel Radio said the trial was expected to last two months. "I deny all charges," Yassin whispered to reporters in the courtroom in Gaza city in the occupied Gaza Strip. However, his lawyer, Abdul Malik Bahanshe, told the court that Yassin founded Hamas and helped transfer funds to the organisation. "My client says it is not just his right but his obligation to establish these organisations to battle the occupation," Bahanshe said. "He's also not sorry for what he did."

"Jews and Arabs should live together in peace," Yassin told reporters as he was pushed in a wheelchair into court. Hamas was founded within a month after the Palestinian uprising against occupation began in December 1987. Government officials did not

move quickly against Hamas, apparently believing it would take away support from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Hamas was declared illegal last September, and Yassin was arrested in November.

Yassin has a long history of scrapes with the law as a Muslim spiritual leader. He was jailed by Egypt while Gaza was under its control and was convicted in 1984 of trying to overthrow Israel and replace it with an Islamic state. He was sentenced to 13 years in prison, but was later released in an exchange of Arab prisoners for Israelis held in Lebanon.

Officials have said they believe those who carried out the slaying of Saadon have fled Israeli-controlled territory, but about 200 of Yassin's followers are being tried separately on charges similar to those against him.



Marisa Mannot del Pinto is attended by an orderly in hospital after losing her eye at a peace rally in occupied Jerusalem. Part of a large Italian delegation, Mrs. Del Pinto's husband told a press conference that his wife was struck in the eye when a water cannon fired by the Israeli police shattered the window of their hotel.

King: Moves under way for proclamation of national pact

AMMAN (Petra) — Practical steps are under way for the proclamation of a national charter which will constitute the best guarantee for national unity in Jordan and a source of strength for the Kingdom, His Majesty King Hussein said Wednesday. The proposed charter will also ensure continued endeavours for the welfare of all people in Jordan, enhancing unity with the Jordanian family, King Hussein said at a meeting held at the Royal Court with leaders of the Christian communities in Jordan and occupied Palestine. "We are keen on safeguarding our national unity, which has always served as the most effective element fusing Jordanians, Palestinians, Muslims and Christians at all levels," the King said. "This has always been Jordan's declared policy and will continue to be in the future," the King added.

King Hussein said he was pleased to meet with the heads of the Christian communities, in whom he takes deep pride, and said that he was strongly committed to the great principles of the Kingdom's founders who devoted their work to attain unity and pledged continued efforts to defend Arab rights in Holy Jerusalem and other parts of the Arab lands. King Hussein expressed his hope that just peace would finally prevail in the Middle East region, and that the Palestinian people will regain their right and their homeland. "With our minds and hearts we sympathise with the oppressed people of the occupied Arab lands and we will continue to provide them with all possible support and help," King Hussein said.

The Christian leaders included the Jerusalem-based Roman Catholic Patriarch Michel Sabbah, Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theodoros I and Armenian Patriarch Yeghishab Derderian as well as Monsignor Raouf Najjar from the Roman Catholic Church in Amman, the custodian of the Holy Land and other religious leaders.

The Greek Orthodox patriarch presented to the King good wishes from the Christian communities in Jordan on the new year and praised Jordan's endeavours towards democratic rule. Patriarch Sabbah paid tribute to King Hussein's efforts to serve his people and country and expressed support for his leadership and his care for all communities in the country. He wished the King continued health and success in leading the country towards further progress.

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Witnesses said the calm was breached by sporadic rounds of artillery as the rival militiamen crept out of their trenches. The sources said Hizbollah handed over to the Palestinians a strategic hill they had captured. Amal ousted Hizbollah from South Lebanon in April 1988 and the pro-Iranian radicals retaliated by driving Amal from Beirut's southern suburbs a month later.

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Turkey may reduce size of military

By John Owen-Davies
Renter

ANKARA — Turkey may reduce the size of its armed forces in the light of East-West developments but plans to push ahead with an ambitious military modernisation programme, defence officials said.

"After there is agreement at the CFE (conventional forces in Europe) talks it is possible we may reduce our forces," General Necip Torumtay, chief of Turkey's general staff, told Reuters. He did not indicate any possible size of cut in the 660,000-strong armed forces, which guard one third of NATO's frontiers with Warsaw Pact countries and are the largest in the alliance after the United States.

Western military sources said Turkey, which borders the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Iran, Iraq, Syria and NATO ally Greece, could afford a cut of up to 150,000 men. "Such a cut would not affect Turkey's combat capability," one source said.

"There are quite a few troops, sailors and airmen doing tasks such as shoe-cleaning and waiting at officers' clubs."

The 23-nation CFE talks in Vienna, trying to negotiate force reductions from the Atlantic to the Urals, are widely expected to end in agreement later this year.

Troop reduction is a sensitive issue in Turkey where about one-fifth of its 18-million civilian workers are unemployed.

Some opposition parliamentarians, who frequently point with

concern to three military interventions in domestic politics between 1960 and 1980, want reductions and facilities earmarked for military construction to be used for civilian purposes.

But officials said Turkey, still using some World War II vintage warships and 40-year-old U.S.-designed battle tanks, would continue a \$10-billion drive for modern equipment, including armoured vehicles and U.S.-designed F-16 fighter jets.

"Greece is the only democratic country among our neighbours. You cannot know who will do that, and when," Defence Minister Sefa Giray told reporters this week.

Parliament last week approved a calendar 1990 defence budget equivalent to \$3.4 billion, double last year's figure and about 13 per cent of the total national budget.

Giray, of the centre-right Motherland Party which has held office since three years of army rule ended in 1983, appeared to rule out any quick reduction in the armed forces.

"Iraq uses \$20 billion of its \$50 billion budget for military expenditure. Other neighbours also spend more than us," he said.

"Given these conditions, a reduction in the number of troops and in the period of military service cannot be thought of. Our troops are not much if we consider our territorial integrity and population," he added.

Military conscription for up to 18 months is compulsory in Turkey, where the armed forces are backed by 125,000 para-military

gendarms whose tasks include patrolling rural areas.

Turkey has 575,800 conscripts, according to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

Turks under the age of 32 working outside the country can avoid all but two months of conscription by paying the state the equivalent of about \$6,000.

Turkey, with a population of 55 million people, also has 951,000 reservists aged up to 46 years, some of whom spend a couple of weeks a year at military camps.

Conscripts and reservists are considered a breed apart from the elite officer corps, whose members see themselves as guardians of the democratic and secularist ideals set out by modern Turkey's founder, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

While Turkey sees a possible diminution of threats from Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, it remains intensely concerned about security in the rugged south-east where separatist Kurds, some based in Iran and Syria, have been fighting since mid-1984.

The southeast, also bordering Syria, is outside the scope of the CFE talks.

Turkey lags behind both Syria and Iraq, both of which are viewed as potential enemies, in terms of some major equipment.

It has 3,700 tanks and 412 combat aircraft, compared with 4,000 tanks and 478 aircraft in Syria and 4,500 tanks and around 500 aircraft in Iraq, according to the IISS.



Turkish military stage a ceremonial parade (file photo)

Bulgarian party under heavy pressure over Turks

KURDZHALI, Bulgaria (R) — Bulgaria's domestic row over its Turkish minority has put new pressure on the embattled Communist Party as it prepares to relinquish the power it has held unchallenged for 40 years.

Thousands of angry Bulgarians chanted anti-Turkish songs in this southern town Tuesday in protest at a decision by the party to restore the minority's rights, including the use of their Turkish names.

The former leadership under Todor Zhivkov, who was ousted in a purge in November, forced ethnic Turks to assume Bulgarian names and restricted their right to practise their Muslim faith.

About 10,000 Bulgarian protesters, shouting "Bulgaria is not Cyprus" and "Turks in Turkey," gathered in freezing temperatures and called on the reformist Communist leadership to resign.

Senior politburo member Andrei Lukanov travelled specially to the town to try to ease the situation, bringing an appeal for national reconciliation.

In the capital Sofia, about 1,000 Kurdzhali residents demonstrated in front of the national assembly, saying the decision to restore minority rights was taken without a full understanding of the situation in their town, the BTA news agency said.

The politburo issued a statement appealing for calm and said ethnic Turks would be given the full protection of the law.

It played down the tension in Kurdzhali, saying the process of restoring Turkish minority rights was "unfolding properly and successfully and the new policy will be implemented."

But local Communist authorities in Kurdzhali, whose 60,000 population is divided about equally between Bulgarians and ethnic Turks, decided Saturday to defy a central party decision to force assimilation of the minority.

The Kurdzhali protesters demanded a national referendum to decide the fate of the country's 1.5 million ethnic Turks, many of whom live in this mountain re-

gion close to the border with Turkey.

The party prepared for round-table talks with opposition groups Wednesday to seek a consensus on moving to a multi-party democracy following increasing popular protest and a series of token strikes across Bulgaria last week.

The Union of Democratic Forces, the strongest opposition force embracing nine independent groups, said in a statement reported by BTA it would not consider power-sharing with the Communists after multi-party elections due to be held by June.

The Communist Party had said it was prepared to consider a post-election coalition, but the union statement said there were no plans to consider "participation in a coalition government with already discredited totalitarian structures."

The Communist Party has already said it will formally erase its leading political role from the constitution at a meeting of the National Assembly on Jan. 15.

More Soviet Jews go to Israel

WASHINGTON (R) — Some 71,196 Jews were allowed to leave the Soviet Union in 1984, 20,000 more than the record emigration year of 1979, a leading Jewish group said Tuesday.

Final figures for last year also show a dramatic upsurge in Soviet Jews settling in Israel and this trend is expected to continue in 1990, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry said.

"Nineteen eighty-nine has proven to be the record year to date for Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union," said conference chairman Shoshana Cardin.

"We trust that 1990 will also prove to be a milestone year and one in which we will witness the resolution of (an estimated 200) outstanding cases of long-term refuseniks and poor relatives," Cardin added.

The conference, which keeps detailed records of Soviet Jewish emigration, said the 1989 total of 71,196 compared with 18,965 in 1988 and 51,320 in 1979 — the benchmark against which such figures had previously been measured.

Jerusalem Post fires 20 editors, reporters

TEL AVIV (R) — The Jerusalem Post has dismissed 20 senior editors and journalists who had asked to leave unless the newspaper's publisher resigned or was fired by the daily's Canadian owners.

The Post's decision Tuesday to dismiss the staff members was swift, coming just a day after the journalists tendered their conditional resignations. President and publisher Yehuda Levy said he had no intention of quitting.

Twenty editors and reporters, including managing editor David Landau and the Post's entire economics staff, were dismissed. Twelve were told to leave the premises within hours of receiving their dismissal notice, staff said.

Four other reporters joined the walkout Tuesday, including one who called in his resignation from Bucharest, where he was on assignment.

The influential English-language Post has been in turmoil since editor Erwin Frenkel resigned last week accusing Levy, publisher since July, of interfering in editorial operations of the newspaper.

Levy has said the Post should

give wider coverage to right-wing views but has denied accusations that he wants to control or alter the editorial line of the daily, which has been highly critical of rightist Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

"I am not a journalist. I do not want to be as journalist. I do not want to be editor," Levy, a former army officer with no previous experience in journalism, told army radio.

Last month, he informed a committee of Israeli editors that he planned to assume effective editorial control of the Post, prompting Frenkel's resignation.

In their resignation letters, the employees accused Levy and the Toronto-based media company Hollinger Inc that bought the Post last year of reneging on promises to preserve editorial freedom.

In Canada, Hollinger President David Radler said: "All we want is fairness and balance. If they're incapable of providing that balance, then I am glad they're gone. Life goes on."

Dismissed staffers packed their belongings in the newsroom Tuesday amid film crews documenting the mass departure.

Sudanese doctor's death sentence said suspended

CAIRO (AP) — Sudan's ruler has suspended a death sentence imposed on a doctor for leading the first strike against the military regime in Khartoum, two reports said Wednesday.

The judgement issued Dec. 10 that Dr. Maamoun Mohammed Hussein should have triggered protests from the United States and other Western nations as well as Arab officials.

Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, who headed a June 30 coup that overthrew civilian government in Sudan, has vowed not to interfere with his military courts and not to commute death sentences they issue.

But Makram Mohammad Ahmad, editor of the weekly magazine Al-Mussawwar who is known as a confidant of President Hosni Mubarak, mentioned the suspension in a lengthy article on Sudan after six months of military rule.

"The decision taken by Lt. Gen. Al-Bashir to suspend the death sentence on the leader of the Sudanese doctors' union opens the way to the return of the professional and trade unions to resume their role," Ahmad wrote, without naming a source.

Political parties, unions and professional associations were among the first casualties of the military regime, banned by one of Bashir's early edicts.

The weekly newspaper Al-Ahali, organ of the opposition pro-Moscow National Unionist Progressive Party, also wrote Wednesday.

"Al-Ahali was learned that Lt. Gen. Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, leader of the Sudanese revolution, promised President Hosni Mubarak during his visit to

Khartoum last Sunday to cancel the death sentence issued against Dr. Maamoun Mohammed Hussein."

Mubarak visited Sudan last Sunday, in connection with Sudan's 33rd anniversary of independence on Jan. 1, and held talks with Bashir.

Except for Bashir's early comments that the sentence would stand, the Sudanese government has refused to elaborate on the imprisoned doctor's fate. Reports circulated in Khartoum that he died under torture, but a government spokesman denied that. Other reports had him secretly executed, and still others that his death sentence was commuted.

Hussein was accused of leading a week-long strike by doctors in late November, the first work stoppage faced by the military government. Because he chaired the meeting at which the strike was declared, he was sentenced to hang. Another doctor received a 15-year prison term.

Labour activity leading to civil unrest have brought down two previous military governments in Sudan, including the 16-year reign of pro-Western dictator Jaafar Numeiri in April 1985.

Thus, Bashir's junta immediately decreed strikes illegal and punishable by death.

The government has struck harshly against people who violated martial law rules.

It executed one young man convicted of dealing in the foreign-currency black market, another for selling drugs. Two others convicted for illegal dealings in foreign currency are presently on death row along with Hussein.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Aden says more reforms needed for unity

ABU DHABI (R) — South Yemen's Prime Minister Yaseen Said No'man was quoted Wednesday as saying a planned merger with North Yemen needed more democratic reforms. "We feel that continuation of reforms is the only way to achieve unity," he told the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al-Khaleej newspaper. "To ensure a guaranteed approach to unity, we have to intensify moves for democracy and reforms," No'man said. Leaders of North and South Yemen signed a draft constitution in Aden in November 30, 1984, setting a one-year timetable for unification in a multi-party state. South Yemen has already begun moves towards political pluralism after years of one-party rule. North Yemen has no political parties. North Yemen's Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al-Iryani said in remarks published Tuesday that Marxism was an alien creed and stressed that plans to unite the countries implied multi-party politics. Aden's Marxism "was a constant danger for the neighbouring (political) systems of the region," Iryani said. "The new unified constitution stresses democracy... and commits itself to parliamentary rule where everyone has the right to choose his representatives," he said.

Saudia plane stuck in mud in Tunis

TUNIS (R) — A Boeing 747 of the Saudi Airline Saudia has been stuck in mud at the end of a runway at Tunis airport since a mistimed landing last Sunday, civil aviation source said Wednesday. The plane, on a flight from Jeddah to Casablanca via Tunis, touched down two far along the runway and ran off the end, they said. There were no injuries among the passengers and little damage to the aircraft, they added. Tunisian engineers and specialists called in from abroad by Saudia were trying to free the 200-tonne plane Wednesday.

5 hurt, 30 held in Assiut

ASSIUT (AP) — Five Muslim militants were injured in clashes with police here Tuesday, a senior security official said. Hassan Abedo, security director of Assiut province, said the clashes began when about 130 Muslim fundamentalists tried to leave a police-besieged mosque to march to the city centre to demonstrate against the government. Police used tear-gas bombs to disperse the demonstrators and arrested 30 of them, Abedo said. He said the arrested were referred to the prosecution office which ordered them remanded to custody for 15 days under charges of resisting authorities, illegal possession of arms and unlawful assembly. Prosecutors charged 78 Muslim militant students with anti-government activity last month but ordered the release of 82 others arrested after a riot and shootout with police in this southern city. Unauthorised public gatherings and demonstrations are banned throughout Egypt under an emergency law in effect since Muslim fundamentalists assassinated President Anwar Sadat Oct. 6, 1981.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:00 Koran
15:40 Programme review
15:45 Children programme
17:10 Book of Adventure
17:15 News for the Deaf
18:20 Religious programme
19:00 Health programme
19:40 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Local series
21:30 Programme review
21:40 Local programme
22:20 Arabic film
23:00 News in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO

15:00 Tel Fero Tel Film
15:30 La Chance aux chansons
15:40 News in French
19:15 Silence on Tourné
19:30 News in Hebrew
19:45 Varieties
20:00 News in Arabic
20:20 A Different World
21:10 NBA Basketball
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: A piece of Action

PRAYER TIMES

05:00 Fair
06:37 (Sunrise) Dufur
11:36 Dinar
14:23 'Asr
16:06 Maghrib
18:09 Tahajjud

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish
Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel.

627785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrace Church Tel. 622566

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Assam International Church Tel. 827981, 685326

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817 and 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will continue to be cloudy and rainy in various parts of the Kingdom. Temperatures will drop further and winds will be southeasterly fresh with strong blows. In Amman, it will be cloudy and rainy. Winds will be southeasterly fresh and seas rough.

Min./max. temp.
Amman 5/17
Aqaba 10/17
Dera' 4/11
Jordan Valley 8/14

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 14, Aqaba 24, Hamdidi readings: Amman 65 per cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Dawood Samhouri 689535
Dr. Issam Abbi 679666
Dr. Ahmad Daq 776719
Dr. Ahmad Agnawi 642696
Al-Salam pharmacy 656730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 637660

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 69841
Civil Defence Emergency 69841
Police 152, 821111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 680321

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hamada Medical Centre 813812/22
Khadija Maternity, J. Am. 642816
Abdullah Maternity, J. Am. 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642642
Mother, J. Amman 656140
Palestine, Shamsi 664171/4
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 843845
Al-Mustashfi Hospital 667279
The Islamic, Abbi 661275/7
Al-Abi, Abbi 664164/6
Italian, Al-Mustashfi 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Amman 775112/26
Army, Mar 896112/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)5200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:45 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
06:50 Damascus (RJ)
06:55 Agaba (RJ)
07:00 Agaba (RJ)
07:05 Agaba (RJ)
07:10 Agaba (RJ)
07:15 Agaba (RJ)
07:20 Agaba (RJ)
07:25 Agaba (RJ)
07:30 Agaba (RJ)
07:35 Agaba (RJ)
07:40 Agaba (RJ)
07:45 Agaba (RJ)
07:50 Agaba (RJ)
07:55 Agaba (RJ)
08:00 Agaba (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:30 London (add.) (RJ)
06:30 Agaba, Rome (add.) (RJ)
07:00 Agaba (RJ)
07:05 Agaba (RJ)
07:10 Agaba (RJ)
07:15 Agaba (RJ)
07:20 Agaba (RJ)
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07:45 Agaba (RJ)
07:50 Agaba (RJ)
07:55 Agaba (RJ)
08:00 Agaba (RJ)

FOR FRIDAY

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

18:00 Koran
18:15 Children programme
18:20 Religious programme
18:40 Friday's prayer
18:45 Religious series
18:50 Feature film
18:55 Message from Oman
19:00 Local programme
19:05 Local programme
19:10 Local programme
19:15 Local programme
19:20 Local programme
19:25 Local programme
19:30 Local programme
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24:00 Local programme

PRAYER TIMES

05:00 Fair
06:37 (Sunrise) Dufur
11:36 Dinar
14:23 'Asr
16:06 Maghrib
18:09 Tahajjud

OTHER FLIGHTS (Terminal 2)

06:00 Damascus, Paris (AF)
06:10 Frankfurt (LH)
06:20 Baghdad (GA)
06:30 Riyadh (SV)
06:40 Bahrain, Muscat (GF)
06:50 Kuwait (KU)
07:00 Ankara, Istanbul (TK)
07:10 Damascus, Dubai (EK)
21:00 Cairo (MS)
21:10 London (BA)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in file per kg.
Apples 420 / 380
Bananas 450 / 400
Bananas (Mekasam) 400 / 350
Beans 350 / 270
Cabbage 100 / 50
Carrot 220 / 180
Cauliflower 180 / 120
Cucumbers (large) 180 / 120
Cucumbers (small) 320 / 270
Dates 520 / 450
Eggs 160 / 120
Gaulth 800 / 700
Grapefruit 200 / 150
Lemons 100 / 70
Marrow (large) 200 / 150
Marrow (small) 180 / 120
Mint (dry) 220 / 180
Onion (green) 180 / 120
Onion 180 / 120
Orange (Shamsi) 280 / 240
Pepper (hot) 220 / 180
Pepper (sweet) 280 / 240
Potato 120 / 100
Raddish 120 / 100
Sage 450 / 400
Spinach 100 / 50
Tomatoes 260 / 200

WHAT

What's on TV tonight

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Queen receives Italian tourists

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor received at her office Wednesday a tourist group of 33 Italian visitors to Jordan comprising corporate leaders, directors of government departments and members of the public at large. They discussed means of further promoting tourism, cultural exchange and other forms of people-to-people contact between Italy and Jordan.

The group's tour is an outcome of Her Majesty's visit to Italy in March of last year in which she focused on promoting Jordan's touristic attractions and cultural life. One of her most effective



HM Queen Noor

ists from Italy is increasing steadily, and may approach the 20,000 mark this year.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Tourism Abdul Karim Kabarti.

Belated rains drench Jordan

By Suhair Obaidat
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — It rained at last. At around 2:30 p.m. Wednesday, a faint drizzle dampened the atmosphere, then it poured. It even hailed for a few minutes, then continued drizzling almost all afternoon and evening.

According to the Department of Meteorology, the country is currently affected by a depression, associated with a cold front expected to last for the next two days.

"Rain is expected to fall over most parts of the northern regions then gradually extend southward," according to the director general of the Department of Meteorology, Ali Abanda. "We hope there will be a sufficient amount of rain in this depression," he added.

Abanda stressed that there was "no need to worry," although the amount of rain since the beginning of the season until the end of December 1989 has been below the average, except in some areas like Deir Alla, Madray and Aqaba.

"It is still not too late for the rainy season to improve," he told the Jordan Times. "Statistics show that (in 20 seasons over 60 years), the amounts of rain can exceed the average even if it was scarce in the beginning of the season," he said.

Reviewing the situation during December, Abanda said rain fell in the first half of the month, temperatures were below the annual average and frost formed in some hilly areas and the badia region. The latter part of the month was dry and relatively warm, with generally light winds.

The country was not affected by the dry easterly winds that normally prevail in this time of the year. The arbi'neich (the period that last for 40 days from Dec. 23 to the end of January), started with dry and relatively warm conditions, as rain did not fall in its first 10 days," Abanda said.

"Yet, contrary to what most people believe that if the arbi'neich starts dry it ends dry, there is still a chance for the season to improve," he assured.

Minister of Agriculture Sulaiman Arabiyat supported Abanda's positive outlook and said "there is no immediate danger of drought and hopefully rain will fall in enough amounts to save the agricultural crops." He refused to comment any further.

No accidents resulting from slippery roads were immediately reported, but some drivers could be seen "stuck" on the road, struggling to fix their vehicles. "I was caught off-guard," said a professor at the University of Jordan. "I did not even switch on the windshield wipers," he said.

Some citizens recalled that a group of leading theologians had organized a special prayer for rains last Friday. Mosques all over the country resounded with appeals to God for the much-needed rains, a mainstay of Jordanian farmers.

"I did not really appreciate the sudden fall of rain when I was walking to the bus stop on my way home. When I left home this morning I did not expect it to rain, so I did not wear my raincoat. As you can see, I was drenched," one of the pedestrians interviewed by the Jordan Times said.

"I am really thrilled. I bought new boots and till now I did not have a real chance to wear them. So as soon as it started to rain, I put them on and went over to my friend's house next door. She thought they are really neat," a 12-year-old girl said.

Car wash stations are members of the rain-loving category. When the depression is over, customers will line up to clean up the aftermath of the messy rain. "People tend to feel somehow embarrassed if they were seen driving mud-splashed car. Some even consider it to be bad for their image," a worker at one of the stations said.

Well, image or no image, nature will take its course and as one farmer put it: "Rain refreshes the earth, cleans the atmosphere and gives us hope of a good agricultural season. May God bless us with more of the same."



Tribal leaders meet with Prime Minister Mudar Badran Wednesday to congratulate him on winning the vote of confidence from the Lower House of Parliament.

Badran, PLO discuss means of coordination

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Mudar Badran Wednesday discussed means of maintaining cooperation and coordination between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) at a meeting with the organisation's representatives in Amman.

Those attending the meeting on the Palestinian side were Palestine National Council (PNC) Speaker Abdul Hamid Al Sayeh and PLO's Executive Committee members: Bishop Elias Khouri, Abdul Razzak Al Yahay, Mohammad Mithem, and Abdul Rahim Ahmad.

The PLO delegation also congratulated the prime minister on his securing a vote of confidence from the Lower House of Parliament.

In his government's policy statement presented to Parliament last month, Badran pledged

to continue Jordan's backing for the Palestinian people at every level.

On Dec. 20, Badran held in-depth talks with PLO leader Yasser Arafat on Middle East affairs, the latest developments in the region as well as Arab-Israeli conflict and the on-going uprising in the occupied Palestinian land.

Later, the prime minister received in his office delegations representing various public organisations and tribal units in Jordan and told them that the government's struggle to win a vote of confidence from Parliament was only the first step in the course of implementing the requirements of democracy in Jordan.

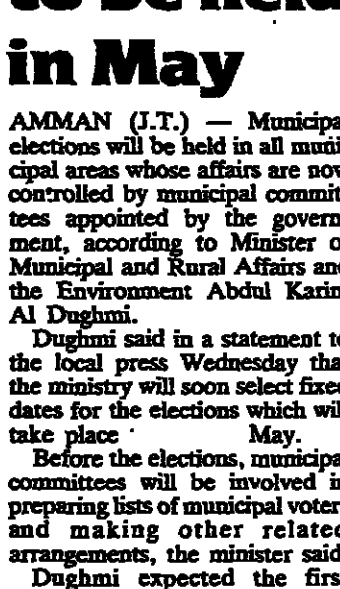
"The new government will strive to maintain democracy as a strong fence providing protection to the citizens of Jordan as

directed by His Majesty King Hussein," the prime minister said.

"The new government will remain committed to close cooperation with the legislative and judicial authorities in the Kingdom because only through this framework can democracy be safeguarded," he added.

He appealed for cooperation on the part of all public sectors with the government so that Jordan can overcome the present difficulties and attain further levels of development.

Among those visiting the prime minister's office Wednesday were Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Mohammad Mheilan, the presidents of the University of Jordan and Yarmouk University, notables and chiefs of bedouin tribes in Jerash, Wadi Seer, Madaba and Bani Hassan.



Abdul Karim Al Dughmi

Municipal elections to be held in May

AMMAN (J.T.) — Municipal elections will be held in all municipal areas whose affairs are now controlled by municipal committees appointed by the government, according to Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Karim Al Dughmi.

Dughmi said in a statement to the local press Wednesday that the ministry will soon select fixed dates for the elections which will take place in May.

Before the elections, municipal committees will be involved in preparing lists of municipal voters and making other related arrangements, the minister said.

Dughmi expected the first municipal election to be held in the city of Zarqa, Jordan's second largest city, which has been controlled by a municipal committee under the then government of Zaid Rifai.

But the minister said there were no plans for upgrading village councils to municipal councils as was reported earlier in Al Rai's Arabic daily.

During this week's Parliament debate on the government programme of Prime Minister Mudar Badran, one of the demands presented by several deputies was for municipal elections for the capital, Amman, and other major cities including Zarqa, where the government usually appoints mayors.

Councils construction Dughmi Wednesday announced his approval of tenders for the construction of village councils in Damia in the Deir Alla district of the Jordan Valley and one for the village council of Brita in Mafray governorate. The combined cost of the two projects is nearly JD 37,000.

Unions voice support for parliamentary rule

AMMAN (Petra) — Presidents of 10 Jordanian professional and trade unions in Jordan Wednesday expressed their wholehearted support for parliamentary rule in the Kingdom.

They said Jordanian citizens now await the translation of the government's programme into reality.

Interviewed by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, presidents of the Jordan Bar Association as well as the associations of engineers, dentists, pharmacists, press, geologists, veterinarians, nurses, banks, insurance companies and labour unions all supported the government's plans for economic and social reform.

The government's plans to abolish martial law, ensure public freedoms, bolster Jordan's cooperation with Arab countries and provide continued help and assistance to the Palestinian people are welcomed by all public sectors in Jordan, the association presidents said in separate interviews with Petra.

Jordan Press Association President Hashem Khreist described the three-day parliamentary debate on the government's policy statement as reflecting the great importance Parliament attaches on the government's actions in the future.

He paid tribute to Prime Minister Mudar Badran for clarifying all points regarding the economic crisis and voiced appreciation to the government and the deputies for displaying increased support for free press in Jordan.

Amman deputies get development briefing

AMMAN (J.T.) — Parliament members representing constituencies in the Amman region visited the Greater Amman Municipality Wednesday and were briefed on plans for development, modernisation and expansion.

A general plan for developing Amman until the year 2005 was presented to the deputies by engineer Sultan Khleifat, the mayor's deputy. Khleifat also spoke in detail about the municipality's new laboratory compound where tests are conducted on samples of food and drinking water for the capital.

He also briefed the deputies on plans for establishing a garbage dump near Russeifa to replace the old one at Marka in the eastern district of Amman. The new dumping area lies on a wasteland

which used to serve as part of mines exploited by the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMMC) at Russeifa.

The deputies were also briefed by Anas Qattan, the mayor's assistant, on the Greater Amman Municipality plans for organising residential areas, building roads and public gardens, setting up retaining walls to prevent soil erosion and projects for developing the central area of downtown Amman.

Amman Mayor Ali Subeimat, who invited the 18 deputies to visit the municipality, spoke in detail about Amman's development in demographic, social and construction terms.

He outlined Amman's expansion since 1909 and presented ideas about future plans.

Hospitals to have independent role

SALT (J.T.) — National Medical Institution (NMI) Director-General Abdul Salam Al Majali inspected Al Hussein Government hospital in Salt Wednesday and announced that decentralisation policies will be adopted at various hospitals in the country.

"Each hospital will have its own independent budget and management and NMI will only provide guidance, control and planning," said Majali during the visit.

Majali, who also visited South Shumeh hospital in the Jordan Valley, told the gathering that NMI will issue a new set of regulations providing incentives for all hospital staff and "fair treatment and justice for all beneficiaries of

the hospitals in Jordan." Majali urged doctors and nurses to try to reduce waste of materials and to rationalise spending so that the NMI can continue to provide medical treatment to the public at the lowest possible cost.

Majali briefed the audience about NMI's development and future plans and also the difficulties it is now encountering in modernising hospitals in Jordan.

Majali, who took over NMI from Daoud Hanania, has been inspecting various hospitals in the Kingdom as part of his preliminary plans to forward the hospitals' modernisation programme.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

CALL FOR DONATIONS: The Chamber of Industry's board of directors has urged Jordanian industrialists to make donations in support of the Palestinian uprising, according to Arabic daily Al Dustour. The industrialists' donations in 1989 amounted to approximately JD 188,000 (J.T.).

JWA OFFICE IN Irbid: Deputy Dr. Huzni Al Shwayyah, Irbid Governor Jawdat Al Shouli, and several members of the Jordan Writers' Association (JWA) Tuesday highlighted the importance of the democratic phase Jordan is passing through and stressed that preservation of democracy is a national responsibility. Following the opening of JWA temporary offices in Irbid, they said that democracy is the ideal method "to attain the objectives of our nation and unify its ranks" (Petra).

CIVIL DEFENCE COURSE: A total of 48 employees of the Princess Basma Centre for Social Services in Irbid Governorate have concluded a course on civil defence. The week-long course included lectures on first aid, rescue, putting out fires, and the role of civil defence department in preserving public safety (Petra).

YARMOUK RECEIVES GIFTS: Yarmouk University Wednesday received a gift of 700 books from the Jordan Book Centre in Amman. The books deal with engineering, law, computer science and science (Petra).

ACC TRADE AND INDUSTRY: The Amman Chamber of Industry will participate in the sixth seminar of the directors of the Arab chambers of trade, industry, and agriculture which will be held in Cairo Jan. 8-10-1990. The Arabic daily Al Dustour reported the seminar would discuss services which Arab and international organisations can provide to Arab chambers of trade, industry, and agriculture (J.T.).

ACC HOUSING TALKS: The Ministers of housing and construction in the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) countries will meet Jan. 10 in Amman. The discussions will deal with the implementation of the articles of a cooperation agreement in the field of housing which the ACC leaders signed recently in San'a (J.T.).

OIL CONSUMPTION: The transport sector in Jordan consumes 39 per cent of oil imported to the Kingdom, according to analytical and technical studies recently conducted by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. The Arabic daily Al Dustour reported that the average annual consumption of a private vehicle was 2,000 litres — JD 40. Sources quoted by the newspaper said the size of vehicles, speed, and loads carried are directly proportional to fuel consumption (J.T.).

IRBID BACKS UPRISING: A week-long cultural and artistic event began in Irbid Wednesday to display the governorate's solidarity with the Palestinian people's uprising, now in its third year. Irbid Governor Jawdat Shouli opened Palestinian photo and cultural exhibitions highlighting the Palestinian heritage and later heard a lecture on the condition of Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails (Petra).

IMPROVED WHEAT SEEDS: The Jordan Cooperative Organisation (JCO) has planted 1000 dunnams of land in the Jordan Valley region with improved wheat seeds. The project was carried out in cooperation with the ministry of Agriculture, according to Abdullah Samman, a JCO coordinator. He said that improved seeds will be distributed to local farmers, who will sell the yields to the JCO at JD 170 per tonne (Petra).

JORDANIAN CHILDREN'S BOOK: A children's book entitled "Children's Literature in Jordan" was issued in Amman Wednesday. The Ministry of Culture, which sponsored the publication of the book, said that it worked with several officials and private organisations to issue the book, which will be distributed to children's libraries and schools (Petra).

N. YEMENI TEAM LEAVES: A North Yemeni civil defence delegation left Amman Wednesday at the conclusion of a week-long visit to Jordan. The delegation held talks with senior officials at the Civil Defence Department (CDD) dealing with expanding scopes of cooperation in the field of civil defence. The delegation also visited a number of civil defence centres in the Kingdom and was briefed on equipment Jordan uses in this field (Petra).

Wish of a lifetime

AMMAN (J.T.) — Craig Sherbold is a seven-year-old little boy, who is in the Royal Marsden Hospital in London. Craig has a tumor in the brain and one on the spine and has very little time left to live. It is his ambition to have an entry in the Guinness Book of Records for the largest number of "Get Well" cards ever received by an individual. Please send Craig a card now at the following address:

Craig Sherbold
58 Selby Road,
Carnarvon
Surrey SW5 1LD
United Kingdom

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITION

- * Art exhibition by artists from Jordan and other Arab countries at Al Wasiti Gallery, Plaza Hotel.
- * An exhibition entitled "They chose 30 poets" at the French Cultural Centre.

FILMS

- * A Czech film entitled "The pied piper" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 8:00 p.m.
- * A German film entitled "It came upon the midnight clear" at the American Centre — 7:00 p.m.

House to begin budget hearing Saturday

AMMAN (J.T.) — Lower House of Parliament Speaker Sulaiman Arar has called Parliament members for a meeting Saturday to hear a statement by Finance Minister Basil Jarrah on the country's 1990 fiscal budget.

The house will also elect 10 members to represent Jordan's Parliament at the meetings of parliamentarians from the four-nation Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), which groups Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and North Yemen. According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Saturday's session will also discuss requests and proposals made by house members.

The Upper House of Parliament has been called by its speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi to meet Thursday to review reports by house committees and to endorse the formation of a legal committee chaired by Najib Al Rashdan.

Usually Parliament is duty bound to approve the next fiscal budget before Dec. 31 of every year. But the 1990 budget debate was delayed because the late formation of the government

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Aoun aide

In January after Assad's planned meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak later this week.

It quoted unidentified political sources as saying Hrawi's talks would focus mainly on Aoun's rebellion and the thorny issue of withdrawing Syria's 40,000 troops stationed in Lebanon under a 1976 Arab League peacekeeping mandate.

Hrawi's government under Prime Minister Salim Al Hoss earlier said it has suspended negotiations to buy arms from the United States, France, Italy, Belgium and Holland.

A government statement said Lebanese diplomatic missions in Washington, Paris, Rome, Brussels and Amsterdam have been instructed to "freeze current and scheduled negotiations for arms, spare parts and ammunition" for the Lebanese army.

All military shipments to the Lebanese army have been halted and all funds earmarked to the military attaché's office of these missions were suspended, the statement said. It mentioned no figures.

The statement was released by Hoss' press office.

The move appeared aimed at preventing Aoun from replenishing the arms lost in six months of shelling duels with the Syrian army across Beirut last year. By police count, 929 people were killed and 2,744 wounded in that confrontation from March to September.

Aoun said Wednesday his French bank accounts were no secret, but may be closed now that they have been disclosed in news reports.

The satirical weekly Le Canard Enchaîné published in Wednesday's edition a reproduction of a bank statement showing two U.S. dollar accounts in Aoun's name at the Banque Nationale de Paris, one with a balance of \$508,000, the other with \$14.7 million.

"It's not a secret for anyone. It's an open secret," Aoun said Wednesday in an interview on the state-run radio station France-Jour. He said he had accounts in other French banks, as well as in the United States and Lebanon.

Aoun said the news report of his account "displeases me so much that I want to close the accounts in France, withdraw the money tomorrow morning."

Weizman

Weizman denied the report and promised Shamir he would meet no PLO members during his eight-day trip to Moscow and Leningrad.

The science ministry said Weizman was going on ministry business and was not sure whether he would be meeting Soviet leaders.

Shamir sparked the crisis by charging that Weizman met the head of the PLO's Geneva office. Weizman described it as a brief encounter in a hotel lobby.

Shamir hoped his self-orchestrated crisis would send a clear message that Israel would never talk to the PLO.

But unidentified Likud parliamentarians, including allies of the prime minister, were quoted as saying the deal could force future Israeli concessions.

"The prime minister to a certain extent condoned the acts of minister Weizman," army radio quoted one Likud member as saying.

Another said: "It is immoral to go before the public one day and say that a minister has been cooperating with Israel's enemies and then a day later keep him in the government."

The United States and Egypt

Wednesday. It was the first disclosure of the life inside the embassy for Noriega.

The U.S.-installed government has closed television and radio stations linked to Noriega and a U.S. delegation led by Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger met Wednesday with President Guillermo Endara to begin planning the country's economic recovery.

The U.S. embassy said Eagleburger would look at ways to help Panama recover from its economic decline, which began largely when the United States imposed sanctions in 1988 in its effort to drive Noriega from power.

Panama's economy was further battered by fighting during the U.S. invasion and widespread looting that followed.

No one is allowed to talk to Noriega, on the orders of Papal Nuncio Jose Sebastian Laboa, according to Vatican embassy deputy spokesman Jose Cubillas.

He said Noriega's room contained only a broken television.

Noriega

Cubillas said Noriega and two aides with him are "very nervous."

Endara's government Tuesday closed two television stations and 10 radio stations and declared them under "state custody."

Government spokesman Edwin Cabrera said the stations would be returned to their owners if their finances were in order.

One of the television stations was owned by Carlos Duque, who was Noriega's presidential candidate in May 7 elections that Noriega annulled. International observers said Endara, the opposition candidate, was far ahead.

"We don't intend to turn these mediums into propaganda machines while they are under investigation," Cabrera said.

He said the government also returned to their owners three newspapers shut down by Noriega. Noriega's government had seized Critica, Matutino and Le Republica and ran them for its own purposes.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975

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Israel getting away with murder

AMNESTY International is a highly reputable human rights organisation that has earned very high marks in monitoring and exposing grave and systematic human rights violations. Its credibility is beyond reproach and its findings have been recognised around the world as being very precise. And when this prestigious human rights organisation confirms in its special January newsletter that the Israeli government has effectively condoned and encouraged extrajudicial execution of Palestinians by its occupying forces to put down their intifada, then the international community is duty bound to take this revelation most seriously and start doing something about it. To begin with, the world should take notice of the true intentions of the Israeli government under Yitzhak Shamir as revealed by Amnesty International. And then the governments and peoples of all the countries concerned about the prospects of peace in the Middle East need to ask the question of how a government with a record of terrorism such as the one that now rules Israel can ever make peace with the Palestinians and the neighbouring Arab states? The horror stories from the West Bank and Gaza Strip can never cease as long as Shamir and his kind are at the helm of responsibility in Israel. And if the crimes against humanity continue unabated in the occupied territories, then there is no way that negotiation for peace in the Middle East can ever get underway. Surely a government that is so contemptuous of international norms and deliberately acts with premeditation and malice kills Palestinians right and left as established by Amnesty International cannot be expected to have the will or the psychology to wage peace with the Palestinians and the rest of the Arab states in the Middle East.

Seen against this backdrop, the findings of Amnesty International must be viewed as an added evidence that Tel Aviv is not and can never be a serious interlocutor for peace in the Middle East and all efforts must be exerted to get rid of Shamir's government as presently constituted. Of course it is up to the Israeli people to do something about their government and it is only the Israelis who can effectively force a change of course in their government's politics. But the international community also has many cards to play as well, be it economic, military or political. If for example the allies of Israel, especially the U.S., can ever be persuaded to respect the findings of Amnesty International and other international tribunals and institutions on Israeli practices and policies, and act accordingly, the days of Shamir and his like could become numbered. But as long as Washington and other Western capitals keep on paying lip service to the cause of peace in the Middle East, Shamir will only interpret such a tolerant stance as an encouragement to keep on floundering international norms and practices, in which case there will never be a chance for peace in the Middle East. The pressing question then is whether the latest Amnesty International findings will have an impact on Washington and the rest of the Western world to start doing something concrete about Israel and its intransigent attitudes.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i Arabic daily Wednesday called on Prime Minister Mudar Badran to consolidate his cabinet by involving representatives of various parliamentary blocs to serve in different portfolios. The paper said that the Islamists in Parliament coupled their vote of confidence in the government with a condition that it carry out certain reforms, perhaps hoping that Badran would select some of the Islamist deputies as members of his cabinet. The paper also referred to the position of the leftist group which, it said, proved to be divided, with some of the group supporting the government, others abstaining from the vote and the rest voicing opposition. The paper said that the leftists should unify their ranks and form a unified bloc if they want to have a say in parliamentary affairs and serve their constituencies. The paper said the government can not deal with 80 different mentalities in Parliament, and it would be more convenient not only for the government but also for the political parties to have political blocs like the Muslim Brotherhood, dealing in groups with the government and in future state affairs. The paper said the leftists ought to group themselves into one bloc, capable of dealing with different issues and aiming to achieve their goals similar to the Muslim Brotherhood which is striving to carry out a programme promised to the electorate.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Wednesday pointed out accusing finger on the world Zionism and the United States for being behind the campaign launched in Romania against the Arab nation. Hossni Ayesh says that Ceausescu has been planted in the Eastern Socialist Bloc by Zionism and the United States, serving as their agent and serving their interest within the socialist camp. The writer says that soon after the dictator's execution the Israelis launched a campaign to distort the Arab nation's image by claiming that Arab forces and Palestinian elements were fighting on the side of the dictator's security forces which had opposed the revolution. Nothing could be further from the truth and none of these allegations had been proven, says the writer. Indeed, the Zionists and the Americans had been behind the hasty trial and execution of the dictator and behind the burning of the official documents in his possession lest they would reveal the facts that he had been a paid agent by world Zionism and the United States, the writer continues.

Sawt Al Shaab Arabic daily Wednesday said that Shamir's threats to dismiss Weizman was no more than a manoeuvre to gain time for his government and to stall, in a bid to kill the American five-point plan. The paper said that Shamir had to resort to anything and to any accusation levelled to any member of his government or his opponent with the hope of avoiding the planned Washington meeting with the United States and Egypt to discuss Baker's election plans for the occupied Arab territories.

By Ed Blanche
The Associated Press

NICOSIA — Efforts are moving slowly to end the Arab-Israeli dispute and other Middle East conflicts, and the decline of hostilities between the superpowers could muddle the region toward greater stability in the 1990s.

Iran-Iraq peace negotiations have stalled. Both sides are rearming amid a growing proliferation of long-range missiles in the region.

This is eroding Israel's long-held technological superiority and heightening superpower concern about a new arms race, including nuclear and chemical weapons, in the volatile region.

The pace of the Arab-Israeli peace process is unlikely to gather momentum for some time, until Israel's right-wing prime minister, Yitzhak Shamir, relaxes his hard-line position of refusing to negotiate with Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Many observers believe this is unlikely unless there is intense pressure from Washington. Shamir, at odds with a faction of his own Likud Party as well as with his Labour coalition partners, is in no position to start making concessions.

Egypt is expected to remain the crucial mediator between Israel — with whom it signed a peace treaty in 1979 — the Palestinians and other Arab states in trying to reach a comprehensive Mideast peace settlement.

The current focal point of the peace process is a 10-point plan produced by Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak, designed to break the deadlock over Israel's blueprint for elections in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, torn by a Palestinian uprising.

Middle East — peace is still far off

The main stumbling block is the Israeli government's refusal to negotiate with Palestinians they believe will speak for Arafat's PLO.

Arafat, backed by the Arab League, insists there can be no peace conference not attended by the PLO, which Arafat acknowledges as the Palestinians' sole representative.

Meanwhile, the two-year-old uprising shows no sign of collapsing. Fears have been raised that it will perhaps intensify if there is no discernible progress in the peace process.

Observers believe Arafat, after publicly renouncing terrorism and recognising Israel's right to exist, has gone as far down the road to moderation as he can without alienating PLO hard-liners.

A year-old dialogue with the United States has failed to result in Washington jarring any concessions from the Israelis. Failure to produce substantive results will leave Arafat exposed and his peace initiative discredited within the PLO.

Hard-liners such as George Habash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine have made clear their patience is running out.

The Arab-Israeli peace process, which has dragged on for more than 20 years with only Egypt's peace treaty to show for it, has a profound impact on the region's other conflicts.

This is most pronounced in Lebanon, the middle East's proxy battleground, where the Arab League was finally jolted into taking forceful action to end 14 years of civil war.

But the peace settlement it brokered has stalled because the army leader, Gen. Michel Aoun, rejects the pact, citing its failure to provide firm guarantees of a



Syrian withdrawal.

The Syrians, their efforts to pacify their unruly neighbour thwarted yet again by the Lebanese Falangists, are becoming frustrated and may yet move again Aoun.

Radical Syria, which needs Lebanon as a security buffer between itself and Israel, is likely to come under pressure from Moscow to moderate its stand on the overall Middle East settlement as

detente improves. Moscow, increasingly crucial to the peace process after years of being edged out by Washington, is already seeking to persuade Syria to abandon its drive for military parity with Israel.

The Kremlin, increasingly concerned with economic and social upheaval at home, has made clear that Syria must end its rifts with Iraq, Egypt and the PLO to achieve the long-elusive Arab unity that is prerequisite for an

international peace conference. Iran, Syria's ostensible ally, also is in transition following the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the election of Hashemi Rafsanjani, leader of the so-called pragmatists, as president last summer.

He seeks to open up Iran after a decade of isolation, attract Western investment and technology to revitalise the moribund economy following the 1988 ceasefire in the 8-year war with Iraq.

He is opposed by revolutionary hard-liners and much will depend on whether he can fend off the challenge and ease the economic hardships that Iran's 55 million population, growing at an alarming 3.5 per cent a year, is demanding.

If he can, one key consequence could be the release of Western hostages held by pro-Iranian militants in Lebanon and the removal of a major source in instability in the region.

Central America — peace, stability remain elusive

By Richard Herzfelder
The Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Central America badly needs relief from a decade of unrest and guerrilla warfare, but peace remains elusive for most of the nations in the region at the outset of the 1990s.

The U.S. invasion of Panama drew predictable denunciation from most governments in the region, but most did not really like ousted strongman Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega. Little impact on relations with the United States was foreseen if the U.S. troops withdraw quickly.

After a hopeful start, efforts to

bring peace to the troubled countries of the region appeared to be in tatters.

Guerrillas and the government of El Salvador became further polarised. The rebels opened their biggest offensive of the civil war in November by attacking San Salvador and targets in all 14 provinces.

Peace prospects appeared even more uncertain in Nicaragua, even with an upcoming election. Although the United States and Soviet Union have become less interested in proxy wars, the lack of democratic tradition in Nicaragua, coupled with social divi-

sions and poverty, argued against quick solutions.

Here is a look at the region from north to south:

Mexico — With 85 million people, Mexico is stable enough to escape the curse of violence. President Carlos Salinas de Gortari has instituted free-market policies designed to attract investment with Salinas-style reforms, but fighting in El Salvador and Nicaragua may discourage it.

Nicaragua — Elections are scheduled for Feb. 25, 1990. Despite a superior political organisation, President Daniel Ortega and his ruling Sandinistas face a tough opposition challenge. If victorious, the Sandinistas will retain control of the army. If the vote is scrapped, regional confrontation may flare.

The contras still based in camps near the Nicaraguan border will be hurt if U.S. aid is cut. War-related poverty, U.S. sanctions and poor management are beginning to rival Haiti's as the worst in the hemisphere.

Costa Rica — An oasis of political and economic stability, it is hampered by its location in a troubled hemisphere. President Oscar Arias leaves office in 1990 with a Nobel prize but no regional peace. Drug trafficking is on the rise.

El Salvador — The rebel offensive in November and the slaying of six Jesuit priests has led to a deterioration of the peace process. The government continues to receive massive U.S. aid. The rebels appear capable of surviving even without Nicaraguan or Cuban aid. Neither side appears interested in serious negotiations.

Honduras — President-elect Rafael Leonardo Callejas takes office in January, but may not

have much to do with solving Honduras' problems. The U.S.-backed contra rebel army is based in border areas, raising tensions with Nicaragua. Callejas hopes to attract investment with Salinas-style reforms, but fighting in El Salvador and Nicaragua may discourage it.

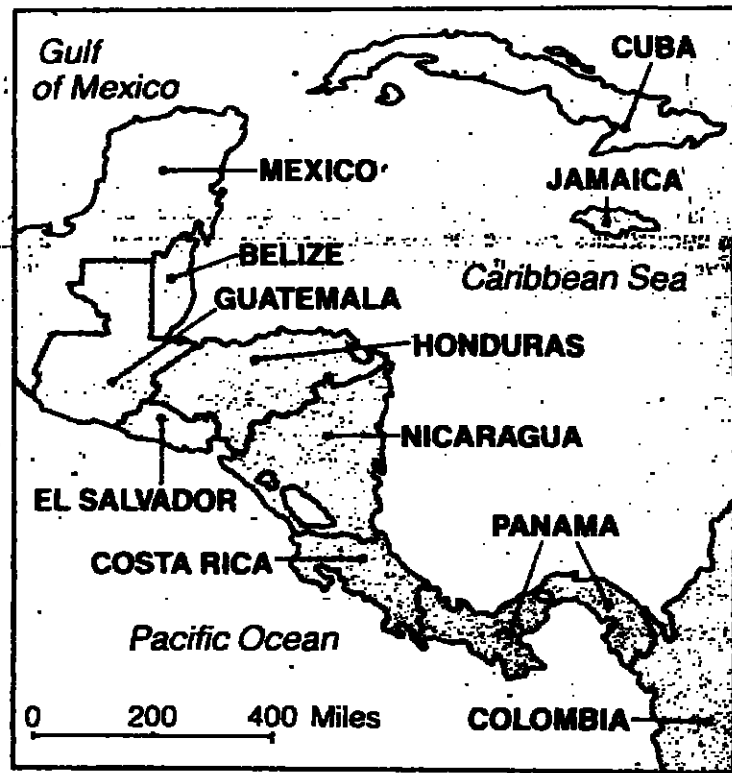
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Honduras — President-elect



States turns the Panama Canal over to full Panamanian authority.

Cuba — Although not part of Central America, Cuba is a strong regional player. President Fidel Castro is a dedicated revolutionary but may have to reduce aid to Nicaragua and El Salvador's rebels because of problems at home.

Increasingly isolated from the Communist world, Castro seems

determined to resist reform and has warned of a need for economic austerity.

That's not going over well with the younger generation. Bored with tales of a 30-year-old revolution, they look to well-off relatives in Miami and think about Rock 'n' Roll. Castro retains personal prestige, but increased dependence on his brother Raul is a sign of rigidity and a narrow power base.

Brazil's new president faces grave economic problems, opposition

By Ken Silverstein
Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil — Brazil's president-elect, Fernando Collor de Mello, faces grave economic problems and broad political opposition — problems made more formidable by the high expectations placed in him.

Upon taking office on March 15, Collor de Mello's first task will be to control the country's spiralling economic crisis. Inflation is more than 1,500 per cent a year and unions say real wages have been halved in the past year.

But many Brazilians hope that their first freely elected president since 1960 will be able to make immediate changes.

One week after taking office, Collor de Mello will make over lives better, increasing salaries and not letting prices rise. Pedro Manoel do Rosario, a fish dealer, predicted in an interview with the weekly newsmagazine Veja.

Helio Jaguaribe, one of the country's leading sociologists, said Collor de Mello will have only 90 days to take emergency measures and bring the economy under control. Otherwise, he said, Brazil faces chaos.

"Brazil is on the verge of a tremendous social explosion, and

the symptoms of economic deterioration are so grave and complex that any responsible person has to be frightened," he said in an interview.

Finance Minister Malson da Nobrega said the lame-duck government of President Jose Sarney can do little to check inflation except to ask businessmen not to raise prices so fast. That measure has been ineffective in the past.

Collor de Mello's conservative economic recipe includes privatising state-run firms, laying off thousands of government employees and reducing the public deficit. Those moves are expected to bring greater economic hardship, at least in the short run.

Collor de Mello has promised to increase social spending for the poor, but critics say there is no money to do so.

"He'll have to be very macho," said Da Nobrega. "It will be hard, but he'll have to say 'no' to a lot of people."

Collor de Mello was elected on Dec. 17 over Socialist Luis Inacio Lula da Silva in a close race that sowed the seeds for substantial opposition to his presidency.

"Lula won overwhelming support from most unionists, professional organisations, the better educated, and rolled up big victories in state capitals and large

cities," said Ophir Cavalcante, president of the Brazilian Bar Association. "Collor de Mello is going to face broad opposition."

That opposition could be crucial in Congress, where Collor de Mello's National Reconstruction Party has only 24 seats — just 3 per cent of the total.

Rep. Renan Calheiros, the president-elect's chief advisor, says Collor de Mello will overcome these obstacles by creating a "government of national unity that excludes no one."

But ill feeling from the election runs deep.

In the campaign's final days, Collor de Mello made vicious personal attacks on Lula and accused his Workers Party of wanting to impose a Communist dictatorship in Brazil.

"I would never sit at the same table as Collor de Mello. The low blows he used made me lose all respect for him," Lula said in a bitter concession statement. He said the Workers Party and other opposition forces would form a "shadow government to prevent Collor de Mello from committing abuses."

Rep. Vivaldo Barbosa, a leader of the left-wing Democratic Labour Party which strongly backed Lula's campaign, said his party would boycott Collor de

Mello's inauguration.

"It's much more than a gesture of opposition. It's a rejection of Collor de Mello," he said.

Many fear the president-elect, who is known for his quick temper, could be unable to deal coolly with his opponents.

"Collor de Mello is completely unpredictable. He may be another Janio Quadros," said political science Professor David Fleischer, of the University of Brasilia. He was referring to Brazil's last freely elected president, who resigned in 1961 — citing "occult forces" — after seven months in office.

Other analysts are more optimistic.

"There's a good chance a sizeable portion of the country's economic elite will back Collor de Mello," said Alexander Barros, director of the political risk firm Early Warning.

Barros said Collor de Mello could form a strong bloc in Congress with the backing of conservative parties.

"There won't be chaos, especially if he can produce results in the economy. It may be tough going at the beginning, but with everybody's going to have to sit down together and negotiate," he said.

Focus on people

Clapping for all

By Marwan M. Shalabi

CLAPPING seems to be a favourite past-time in Jordan or so it seemed earlier this week. As over 1500 people jammed into the parliamentary building in Abdali last Saturday, Sunday and Monday the nation's democratic experiment seemed to be going in full swing.

Deputies both praised and raved the government of Mudar Badran in their more than often-long, drawn out and frequently boring speeches. While most of the over 400 deputies who took to the parliamentary podium received unimpassioned attention from the audience, a few seemed to bring "the house down" with enthusiastic clapping which they aroused by their commentaries.

What was the most amazing phenomena of all was the "clapping trend." One young man attending the three day attraction was Samir Abu Adnan. This young man in his mid-twenties spent three days watching and listening to the parliament's deliberations and commentaries. He clapped vigorously to the speeches made by deputies Ahmad Aweidi, Abbad, Thugan Hindawi, Issa Madanat, Leith Shbeilat, Abdul Minem Abu Zant, Bassam Haddadin, Yacoub Qarash, Fakhri Kassar and finally the prime minister himself Mudar Badran.

Now anyone attending any of the three day sessions or following them in the local media will know that the above mentioned are people without a common thought forum. Their political affiliations vary from the far left to the far right to theology. What Samir did in enthusiastically clapping for all of these speakers after genuinely enjoying their speeches is an indication of something. Furthermore, Samir was not alone. Many of the spectators who attended the parliament's commentary on the governments programs reacted similarly to Samir.

This week Samir Abu Adnan speaks to Focus on People about himself, why he clapped for whom, and in afterthought what an "ordinary citizen" who did not vote in the Nov. 8 elections, he thinks it all means.

Samir is 24 years old, he has lived most of his life in Jordan's northern most city, Irbid. After graduating from a public high school and receiving a grade of 80 per cent in his tawjihi examinations he opted to study journalism at the school of journalism at the University of Yarmouk. Subsequent to his graduation Samir, like all young Jordanians of his generation served in the armed forces for two years. He has been out of the army for a year and a half and he is still unemployed.

Although Samir's parents are not 'rich' as he says, they have managed to support him till now. Although at 24, Samir has never earned a day's salary in his life, he seems confident that he will find the kind of work he wants, "something in my line of specialisation."

"Our main problem is that the journalists association in Jordan has not recognised our college, thus no newspaper or publication wants to hire us. First of all we can't find a job to just practice our craft as undergraduates because the association has not recognised our department and without experience no paper anywhere will hire us. If they don't want us to work on this field, why open the college?" he asks.

Samir's situation is one that many young and not so young people in Jordan are having to deal with on a daily basis.

At this point unemployment among young graduates seems to exist in Jordan because of some administrative hinders, social ethics which "forbids" people from doing just any old job, and a lack of planning and coordination on the part of the establishment, be it the ministry of education or the student and his parents.

"I am here because I have nothing else to do," said Samir, referring to this to his three day attendance of the parliamentary session. "If I were working I'd probably be here anyway covering the parliamentary news for some paper."

Samir and his fellow journalist graduates from Yarmouk were all attending the parliamentary session. It is important for them to keep up with "what is happening," just in case we find work at least we will know what is going on," Samir says.

Samir thinks that Jordan's ongoing experiment with democracy is the most thrilling and exciting thing to happen to the country since he can remember. "I couldn't believe it, everyone said exactly what he pleased and the government sat and listened. Later, the prime minister gave his reply. It was all very civilised. I liked it. I was proud," Samir recalls.

"I know very well that a lot of the speakers did not have a lot in common with one another, except that they all made sharp criticism of past governments, officials and the current prime minister and his supposed dealings in the past. But that alone was something to clap about," Samir says.

His enthusiasm he says was "because, they were courages to say what they did, no matter what. In the past a lot of people were not allowed to speak out against their own shadows. Now a known Communist, who spent eight years in jail because he was a Communist, is elected to parliament and makes a speech. He has not been forced to capitulate, he speaks his mind, he criticises, people clap, he takes his seat, at the end of the day he goes home and has dinner. He is a free man," Samir says.

This young man, who, although he has never been exposed to any form of harassment from officials because of outstanding political views, shows an innate sympathy for those who have.

"Some of the attacks made by the deputies were rather personal, I thought. It is like that even in the west. I always read about American politicians and the way the media scrutinises what they have for breakfast and what their birth signs are and what that shows about their character and so on. Sometimes that is a real waste of time, of course, but that is part of democracy, I guess."

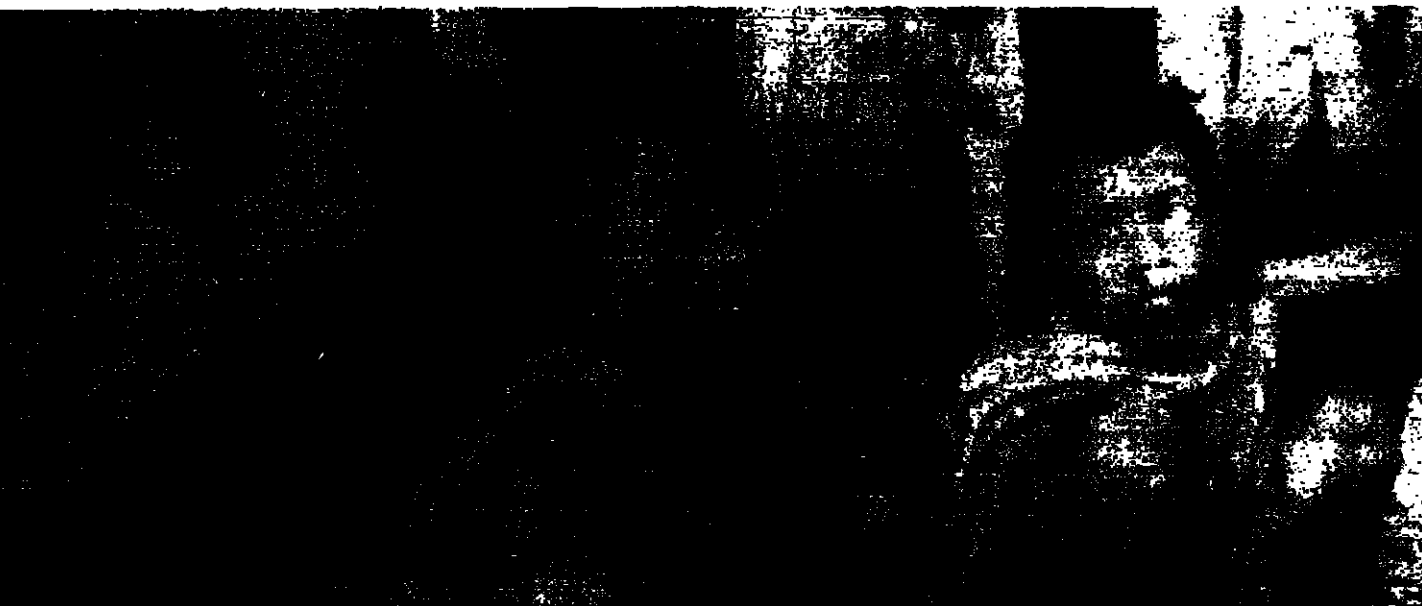
Trying to understand the motivations behind what happened in the parliament earlier this week Samir says is relatively simple. "There is a saying that my grandmother taught me when I was young. It says that one should always know a person's background, what he has experienced and then one knows exactly why he does what he does and how he does it," Samir explains.

He goes on to explain that if each of the deputies who did not give the government a vote of confidence is analysed like this then "you will know why they chose to say no or abstained. Those who voted in favour of the government can be analysed in the same way," Samir concludes.

"It's 1990 and I'm glad I'm living at this time in history. Now if I could only find a job," says Samir with a sigh.

Jordan Times

Tel: 667171-6



One-hundred million children will die in the 1990's

THE GOVERNMENTS of the developing world as a whole are now devoting half of their expenditures to debt servicing and military spending. These two essentially unproductive activities, says this year's State of the World's Children report from UNICEF, are now costing almost \$1 billion every day — or approximately \$400 a year for every family in the developing world.

Meanwhile, says the report, nearly 8,000 children are dying every single day because they have not been immunised; nearly 7,000 are dying every day from dehydration caused by diarrhoea, and approximately 6,000 are dying every day from pneumonia.

Making available today's low cost solutions to all of these child health problems would cost approximately \$2.5 billion a year. "It is a great deal of money," says UNICEF. "It is as much as the Soviet Union has been spending on vodka. It is as much as U.S. companies have been spending on advertising cigarettes. It is as much as 10 per cent of the EEC's annual subsidy to its farmers. It is as much as 2 per cent of the developing world's military spending."

A Summit for Children

On present trends, more than one hundred million children will die in the decade ahead. "They will die in the smoken-eyed coma of dehydration," says UNICEF. "or in the gasping extremities of pneumonia, or in the iron grip of tetanus, or in the fever of measles, or on the rack of whooping cough."

These five common illnesses — which can all be inexpensively treated or prevented by vaccines, oral rehydration therapy, or antibiotics — account for over half of all child deaths and child mal-

nutrition in the modern world.

Arguing that only high-level political commitment can put today's low-cost solutions into practice on the necessary scale, UNICEF has called for a World Summit for Children to be held in September, 1990, at the U.N. headquarters in New York. It would be the first time that Heads of state had met to discuss a major social issue. The Summit would also give a boost to the new Convention on the Rights of the Child, which UNICEF says should become "the standard by which any civilised nation, rich or poor, will be ashamed to fail."

"It is time that the needs of children were given this kind of priority," says UNICEF's Executive Director James P. Grant. "Protecting the physical and mental development of children is the most important of all investments in the social and economic development of our societies. Doing what can now be done to achieve that goal is therefore an issue worthy of its place on the agenda of the world's political leaders, the world's press, and the world's public."

Achievements

The achievements of recent years have shown what can be done if the will is there. Immunisation, which protected fewer than 10 per cent of the developing world's children a decade ago, now reaches 70 per cent and is saving the lives of approximately 2 million a year. Oral rehydration therapy, little known outside scientific circles until the early 1980s, is now being used by one family in every three in the developing world and is estimated to be preventing 1 million child deaths each year from diarrhoeal dehydration.

In addition, says UNICEF,

there are an estimated one and a half million children who are "walking, running, and playing normally in the villages and neighbourhoods of the developing world today who would be crippled by polio were it not for the immunisation efforts of the last decade."

Achievements of this kind, says UNICEF, show that it is possible — in practice — to prevent the majority of illness, malnutrition, and early death among the children of the 1990s. "These breakthroughs have meant mobilising today's new communications capacity to put science at the disposal of the majority of the human family," says Grant. "A further sustained effort to support families everywhere in using new knowledge about the importance of timing births, about exclusive breastfeeding for the first few months of life, and about how to actively promote a child's nutritional health, could transform the well-being of millions of children in the decade ahead."

Outbreak of peace

Pointing out that military spending has been cut or frozen in the USA, the USSR, China, India, and Pakistan, and that there are now fewer wars being fought than at any time in the last 50 years, UNICEF's Executive Director James Grant believes that an outbreak of peace could represent an opportunity for the world's children. The sums involved are so huge — with the world's military spending now exceeding the combined incomes of half of humanity — that even a partial escape from today's levels of military spending could bring new vistas of human achievement suddenly nearer.

The moral argument for this 'new preoccupation' is an obvious one. "Every single one of the

40,000 children who die each day," says UNICEF, "was a child who had a personality and a potential, a family and a future. And for every child who has died today, several more are living on with malnutrition and ill health, unable to fulfill the mental and physical potential with which they were born."

But there is also a practical argument. The long-term consequences are well known, says the State of the World's Children report:

— malnutrition means poor physical and mental growth, poor performance at school and at work, and the perpetuation of poverty from one generation to the next.

— high child death rates mean high birth rates and rapid population growth

— lack of education precludes people from contributing fully to, or benefiting fully from, the development of their communities and their nations

— hopelessness and the denial of opportunity erode self-respect and sow the seeds of almost insoluble social problems for future generations

— entrenched injustices, and the parading of unattainable wealth before the eyes of poverty, provoke an instability and violence which often take on a life of their own

— deprivation precludes environmental sensitivity, forcing millions to over-exploit their surroundings in the name of survival.

For these practical and long-term reasons, UNICEF concludes that a major renewal of effort to protect the lives and the development of children would be "the greatest long-term investment which the human race could make in its future economic prosperity, political stability, and environmental integrity."

Beckett rewrote rules of drama

Reuters

PARIS — Samuel Beckett, the reclusive Irish playwright whose death was announced Tuesday, changed the shape of 20th-century theatre with tragicomic plays of brooding despair.

Beckett, 79, died of old age and respiratory problems in a Paris hospital last Friday afternoon and was buried in closely-guarded privacy at the Montparnasse cemetery.

The gaunt Irish protestant lived in Paris for more than half a century, writing plays that became ever shorter and contained little or no conventional action or plot.

His most famous play, "Waiting for Godot", about two tramps in a no-man's land of the spirit, influenced a generation of writers with its stark poetic pessimism and bleak humour.

First produced in 1953, it slowly brought Beckett fame that culminated in the award of the Nobel literature prize in 1969.

Before "Godot", he wrote novels of increasing introspection. Afterwards he worked mainly in the theatre.

A Beckett play is a synonym for a work of difficult brevity, a cry of pain from an almost bare stage. One, "Breath", lasts only 35 seconds and consists of light and breathless.

"At the end of my work, there is nothing but dust," Beckett once said.

On his 80th birthday in 1986, universities and theatres around the world honoured Beckett with conferences, readings and special seasons devoted to his work.

Typically, Beckett attended none of them.

But despite his love of privacy and the pessimistic vision of his work, Beckett was said by friends to have a sharp sense of humour.

When actress Billie Whitelaw, famous for her parts in Beckett's plays for 20 years, told the playwright she had been invited to lecture on him to students in the United States but did not know what his work was about, he roared with laughter.

"Well, Billie," she quoted him as saying, "You can tell them the author doesn't know what the hell it's about either."

Beckett was born in Dublin of Protestant parents on April 13. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, lectured at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris and later at Trinity college.

He published his first book, a poem called "Whoroscope" in 1930.

He made his home in Paris in the late 1930s and came under the influence of Irish novelist James Joyce — author of "Ulysses" — for whom he carried out research.

Joyce's novels were wordy and lengthy, the total opposite of Beckett's mature work. Beckett was quoted by theatre critic Martin Esslin as saying: "Joyce was a synthesiser, trying to bring in as much as he could. I am an analyst, trying to leave out as much as I can."

In 1938, the year he published his novel "Murphy", Beckett was stabbed in the chest in a Paris street by a man who asked him for money. A young woman he had never met stopped to help him to hospital.

This started a relationship between Beckett and the woman, Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil, that led to their marrying secretly in Folkestone, England, in 1961.

During World War II, Beckett stayed in France and joined the resistance against the German occupation.

"I was so outraged by the Nazis, particularly by their treatment of the Jews, that I could not remain inactive," he said. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre for his war services.

Beckett later began writing in French, translating his own works into English from the original.

In 1948, while still primarily a novelist, he began to write "Godot". It was a relaxation, he said later, "from the awful prose I was writing at the time."

Produced five years later, "Godot" received mixed reviews around the world. But, in time, it came to be held as a masterpiece. Influencing younger playwrights like Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard and Edward Albee.

Its two characters, Chaplinesque tramps, wait for Godot, who never comes. The audience never learns who Godot is, and the play has no traditional action or framework of time.

Among other major plays were "Endgame" and "Krapp's last tape", produced in 1958 and heralding plays that got shorter and shorter, often with just one character.

Beckett then returned in the late 1970s to prose, alternating his theatrical output with a series of compact poetic texts with such titles as "Ill seen ill said" and "Worstward Ho". At the age of 81 he completed three short texts under the title "Stirrings still."

In awarding him the Nobel Literature prize, the Swedish academy said he was being honoured for his new forms of the novel and drama about "The destitution of modern man."

Beckett, who often staged his own plays, always guarded his privacy. Friends shielded him from prying outsiders, and his wife, who died in July 1989, often represented him on social occasions.

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Jordan Times

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Oman stresses private sector role

DUBAI (R) — Oman looks set to achieve a real 1990 budget deficit lower than projected but remains cautious due to notoriously volatile oil prices, and hopes to set a firmer basis for greater private-led growth in the future.

This year's budget, announced Monday, set a 1990 deficit of 314 million riyals (\$815 million) with spending eight per cent higher at 1.75 billion (\$4.5 billion) and revenue at 1.43 billion (\$3.7 billion).

The government, repeating its policy of 1989, projected 1990 revenues on 1989 oil prices despite a general belief amongst analysts that world oil prices will be firm this year.

Independent economists believe Oman budgeted 1989 revenues on an oil price of \$12.50 a barrel while the final average was around \$15 to \$16 for last year. Oil revenues account for about 90 per cent of total state income. Oman Tuesday raised its monthly December crude price to \$17.70 per barrel.

Deputy Prime Minister for Financial and Economic Affairs

Qais Ibn Abdul Monim Al Zawawi said that for this same reason the real 1989 deficit would come out lower than the projected 407.6 million riyals (\$1.1 billion), but did not say by how much.

Omani ministers and officials in a series of reports for the coming year outlined their plans for a gradual reduction in the state's role in the economy.

The policy is similar to that in other Gulf Arab oil producing countries which have begun to see the dangers of continually leading growth through spending state incomes which rely almost exclusively on moves in world oil prices.

Cutting the state role may not be easy. State spending as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), which is the value of all goods and services produced in the economy, was 55 per cent in 1988 and as high as 67 per cent in 1986, the year of Oman's biggest recorded deficit following the oil price collapse.

Commerce and Industry Minister Salem Ibn Abdullah Al Ghazali said government policy should encourage the private sector to participate more effectively in economic development.

Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Mohammad Ibn Abdullah Ibn Zaher Al Himai said his sector would try to produce more food to cut down imports, and create jobs.

The sector is only four to five per cent of total gross domestic product but growing quickly, especially in fisheries.

Senior central bank official Mohammad Abdul Aziz Kalmoor said monetary stability remained a cornerstone policy.

Oman's other main concern is holding off imported inflation due to its large imports of consumer and capital items.

"Imported inflation... is more difficult to contain," said Kalmoor in his report.

Economists say anti-inflationary measures in the European Community (EC), which is Oman's biggest trade partner, will help contain imported inflation.

But the recent rise in most EC currencies against the dollar could offset this by raising EC import prices in Oman, where the rial is effectively linked to the dollar.

Omani officials see import diversification as the answer to this particular dilemma.

Independent economists see a long-term improvement only through a greater private sector role in developing the manufacturing and processing sector to substitute imports.

Oman, however, is confident of a better future for its oil output in the next five years. Oil Minister Said Ibn Ahmad Al Shanfari said Oman could reach 670,000 barrels per day oil output over the next five years from 600,000.

Oman's main oil problem is lack of major reserves. Shanfari said proven reserves now are 4.2 billion barrels and he was optimistic more would be found.



Sahman Tarawneh

Income Tax Department collects JD 51 million

MADABA (Petra + J.T.) — The Income Tax Department Wednesday announced the opening of an office in Madaba city south of here to help speed up tax collection procedures.

Gulf Arab countries prepare new drive for higher oil output

DUBAI (R) — On the eve of the launch of their latest pact to cut production to sustain prices, Gulf states were already jockeying for a bigger share of oil output in OPEC.

On Sunday, Saudi Arabia's powerful King Fahd put his weight behind calls by Gulf states for a larger share of oil output in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

King Fahd said his country would consult with other OPEC members to raise its share of OPEC production when market demand warrants.

"This is the current Saudi position. They are increasing spending and plan to apply to raise their quota accordingly when demand grows, to earn more cash," a Gulf-based oil industry analyst said.

The Saudis will spend \$15 billion to boost capacity to 10 million barrels per day (b/d) in the next five to six years from an estimated 6.5 million now, oil industry sources say.

Other Gulf Arab states, especially Kuwait, Iraq and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), are also pressing ahead with capacity boosting projects to match predicted growth in world demand in 1990s.

The International Energy Agency, the Western world's energy watchdog organisation, estimates the Mideast share of world supply will grow to 34 per cent from 24 per cent now.

The five big Gulf oil states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Iran and Iraq — plan to capture the increase in world demand as they have two-thirds of the world's crude reserves. They are also investing heavily to boost output capacity.

But Gulf oil industry analysts said they expect Kuwait, the UAE and Saudi Arabia to show some production moderation. The latest OPEC pact, setting a 22.1 million b/d output ceiling for the first half of 1990, came into effect Monday.

OPEC's total output was estimated around 23.6 million b/d in November and December was similar, oil sources in the Gulf said.

They said although the exact levels of output on the first two days of January were not available, Kuwait and the UAE, which were producing well above their allocations in the second half of last year, would most probably trim a total of 800,000 b/d off output in January.

Kuwait, which returned to OPEC's quota system last November after gaining a 1.5 million b/d allocation, will have lowered output to that level from around two million b/d in December, they said. It had rejected its allocation last June and had remained out of the system.

"Kuwait is trying hard to go down to that level, reducing refinery runs, buying crude in Europe for its refineries there," an oil industry executive in Kuwait said.

The UAE, although it opted to remain out of the OPEC pact last month claiming its individual allocation was too small, will most probably lower its total output to around two million b/d from around 2.3 million in December, the source said.

The UAE cuts will come from Abu Dhabi, the biggest producer in the UAE, where some fields were producing above sustainable capacity in the past few months and need maintenance, the sources said.

Saudi Arabia, which in December pumped around 5.5-5.6 million b/d, might lower output to around its new 5.38 million quota level. But some oil analysts had doubts.

If the Saudis want to have an absolute 24.46 per cent share of real OPEC output, as distinct from the ceiling amount, they might leave their output where it is, one oil analyst said.

Iran and Iraq with equal 3.140 million b/d quotas were expected to pump around this level in January, the sources said.

ECONOMIC NEWS BRIEFS

U.S. bank reduces equity in Egypt

CAIRO (R) — Bank of America has sold its stake in its Egyptian joint venture Misr America International Bank (MAIB). Bank of America manager Omar Sakr has said. He said it would keep its own branch in Egypt and continue to cooperate closely with MAIB. "We are committed to staying in the country," Sakr told Reuters. Bank of America sold its 40 per cent stake in MAIB to Red Sea Enterprises, which already owned shares in MAIB. Set up in 1977, MAIB has a capital of 45 million Egyptian pounds (\$17.4 million). The other shareholders are Misr Insurance, Banque Du Caire and the Development Industrial Bank. Sakr said Bank of America would retain a window in MAIB — a practice used by foreign banks to carry out banking operations in Egypt from which they are excluded. Last month, Lloyds Bank announced it was closing its Cairo branch. It said the decision was part of overall company policy and not connected to conditions in the country.

Real estate deals earn Jordan JD 24m

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lands and Survey Department last month collected JD 2,136,756 in fees from real estate registration and other services related to land and buildings according to Ahmad Jamal Hussein, the department's acting director. He said that the amounts collected during the past year of 1989 exceeded JD 24 million, registering an increase of JD 6.5 million over 1988 revenues. Hussein said that the increase in fees and revenues were due largely to a spate of buying and selling in the past year during the Jordanian expatriates' presence in Jordan for the summer holiday. The department director said that most of the revenues were on real estate selling in the Amman governorate.

Peruvian inflation hits 2,775%

LIMA, Peru (AP) — The government's National Statistics Institute has released figures showing prices rose 33.8 per cent in December, bringing the 1989 inflation rate to 2,775.3 per cent. The figure puts Peru in second for inflation among Latin American countries. Only Argentina, whose 1989 inflation is expected to be around 5,000 per cent, is higher. Brazil and Nicaragua, two other countries that battled hyperinflation last year, had annual rates of 1,765 per cent and 1,500 per cent, respectively. Peru's 1988 inflation rate was 1,722 per cent. The lowest monthly rate reported by the Peruvian government last year was June's 23.1 per cent. April's 48.6 per cent was the year's highest. In June, the government began a series of daily devaluations of the currency, the inti, against the dollar to stabilise exchange rates and slow inflation. The black market exchange rate remained stable in December, closing the year at 13,600 intis to the dollar.

Vietnam's state sector fails

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — Vietnam's state-owned enterprises displayed embarrassing inefficiency in 1989 after losing their subsidies and monopoly rights, and a third of them still cannot make it, the official Vietnam News Agency reported. The report said 1989 was "a year of big trials" for these enterprises as they faced "stiff competition" from other sectors. The statement was an apparent reference to the private and family-owned businesses that have been allowed to flourish in the past three years of Western-style reforms. "Entering the race, the state sector, which until recently had been greatly favoured by subsidisation and monopoly rights in many respects, showed visible embarrassment due to its cumbersome and inefficient managerial mechanism and outdated technology," the report said. It said the hard times peaked in May, when many enterprises were seriously short of capital because they could not sell more than one trillion dong (\$2.2 billion) worth of stock, laid off 20 per cent of their workers and closed some district-level factories.

Egypt to pay cash for wheat

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has offered to use scarce hard currency to replenish its depleted stocks of wheat after France refused to provide supplies on credit in a dispute over unpaid debts, foreign experts said Wednesday.

France, a major supplier, has held up wheat and flour sales because of the debt row, threatening Egypt with a major supply crisis by June this year, the experts say.

To head off the shortfall, Egypt will tender for 200,000 tonnes on Jan. 20, trade sources in Paris said.

Egypt last bought wheat for cash in June with a world tender for 200,000 tonnes, marking the first time it had made a complete cash purchase since the early 1970s.

But foreign experts say the cash offer will still not be enough to prevent stocks falling to dangerously low levels.

Egypt, the world's third largest wheat importer after the Soviet Union and China, imports about seven million tonnes of wheat each year to keep up supplies of subsidised bread.

Despite cash problems, the government cannot risk cutting back wheat imports, fearing rioting by a population already sorely hit by economic depression.

Trade sources estimate that Egypt needs to import about 460,000 tonnes of wheat every month and 125,000 tonnes of wheat flour. Without French wheat, stocks could fall to less than 100,000 tonnes by June.

Wheat flour stocks earlier looked set to run out altogether by June although France has since agreed to send 40,000 tonnes of wheat flour in food aid.

Egypt buys about 40 per cent of its wheat from the United States with the rest divided roughly equally between the European Community and Australia. Most is bought on credit.

It has so far agreed to buy 1.5 million tonnes of wheat from Australia — with part of the payment in cash — and has some supplies due in from the United States.

Australia is also supplying 50,000 tonnes of wheat under its food aid programme.

But France, the main EC supplier, said last month it would not provide export credit guarantees to cover the shipment of 150,000 tonnes of wheat flour because of credit disputes.

Government officials in Paris said Wednesday France and Egypt planned to hold talks in Cairo this month to try to resolve the dispute.

Foreign experts said it was unclear which debts were involved but could include arrears on previous wheat sales. It does not include debt which would be subject to rescheduling at any agreement at the Paris Club of creditor nations.

Egypt stopped repayments on most of its foreign debt 18 months ago and now has barely enough money to meet even essential repayments. It is trying to reach an accord with the International Monetary Fund on an economic reform programme before it can reschedule its debts.

But Egypt's foreign exchange shortage is also causing Cairo problems with other suppliers. Economic sources said Egypt has fallen behind on repayments on U.S. food aid programme, threatening future supplies.

As a result Egypt faces a choice of scraping together the foreign exchange to repay some debts to soften up its suppliers, or paying in cash, again using up scarce foreign currency.

It will be competing on world markets against other cash buyers like Turkey and Pakistan for the relatively small amounts of uncommitted wheat available.

THE BETTER HALF. By Harris

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AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Wednesday, January 3, 1989
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell
U.S. dollar	649.0	655.0
Pound Sterling	1045.5	1056.0
Deutsche mark	377.4	381.3
Swiss franc	410.7	414.8
French franc	110.4	111.5

Japanese yen (for 100)	445.1	449.6
Dutch guilder	334.2	337.5
Swedish crown	103.7	104.7
Italian lira (for 100)	92.4	93.9
Belgian franc (for 10)	179.6	181.4

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

	U.S. dollars
One Sterling	1.6110/20
One U.S. dollar	1.1615/25
	1.7123/30
	1.9353/65
	1.5698/5708
	36.03/08
	5.8475/8525
	1283/1284
	145.50/60
	6.2525/75
	6.6483/6535
	6.6620/70
One ounce of gold	396.50/397.00

	U.S. dollars
Canadian dollar	1.1615/25
Deutsche mark	1.7123/30
Dutch guilder	1.9353/65
Swiss franc	1.5698/5708
Belgian franc	36.03/08
French franc	5.8475/8525
Italian lire	1283/1284
Japanese yen	145.50/60
Swedish crown	6.2525/75
Norwegian crown	6.6483/6535
Danish crown	6.6620/70
U.S. dollars	396.50/397.00

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GYANT
DANAP
GURFEE
PURROA

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: THE _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumble: FUNNY BUMPY REBUKE TROPHY
Answer: What happened when nylon stockings were first introduced? — THERE WAS A "RUN" ON THEM

Peanuts
Mutt'n' Jeff
Andy Capp

Peanuts
A NICE WALK ON NEW YEAR'S DAY GIVES YOU A CHANCE TO THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE...
AND MAYBE EVEN RESOLVE NOT TO REPEAT THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST...
LIKE, I'LL BET HE FORGOT THE COOKIES AGAIN.

Mutt'n' Jeff
JULIUS AND I ARE GOING TO THE BEACH!
YOU BETTER GET A BOTTLE OF SUNTAN LOTION SO YOU DON'T GET SUNBURNED!
OWWW... THIS SUNBURN HURTS AWFUL!
DIDN'T YOU GET THE SUNTAN LOTION?
SURE! WE DRANK THREE BOTTLES OF THE STUFF! DIDN'T HELP!

Andy Capp
YOU'VE NEVER CAUSED A SCRAP ABOUT ME!
WHO'S STAYED IN AND KEPT YOU COMPANY THE LAST COUPLE OF NIGHTS? — I'D CALL IT THAT CARING!
I'D CALL IT NOT HAVING THE FRICTION OF A PINT!
LEAVE IT, LAD. YOU'RE ON A LOSER.

Becker full of confidence

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) — Big-hitting Boris Becker braved the midday sun Wednesday, taking to the practice court just 12 hours after jetting into Australia from Europe to begin preparing for the Australian Open.

Becker will play in the New South Wales Open at White City from Monday to prepare for the open, which begins Jan. 15 at the national tennis centre in Melbourne.

His opponents in both tournaments include world number one Ivan Lendl of Czechoslovakia, who currently is preparing at a resort north of Sydney owned by his coach, Tony Roche.

Becker last month led West Germany to victory over Sweden in the Davis Cup final and said he was feeling confident about 1990. "I don't know what is going to happen in the future, but my aim

is to win as many matches as possible," the West German said Wednesday when asked about the possibility of taking the number one ranking from Lendl.

"If I play well then we will see. Right now I feel good, although it is very hot today," Becker said. Temperatures soared over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37 degrees Celsius) Wednesday, but that didn't stop coach Bob Brett from giving Becker a vigorous workout.

"It will take a couple of days to get adjusted to the conditions and the courts, so for me the Sydney tournament is a good preparation," Becker said.

Becker was beaten in the fourth round of the Australian Open last year by Jonas Svensson of Sweden and said he was determined to make up for that loss this time around.



Boris Becker

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1990

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Wright Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Early morning confusion can be dispelled by adopting a new attitude but you can expect to experience more delays and disappointments in the afternoon and evening.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) New ideas presented at home can make some family drama come true. Try to be off on some quest today for more happiness with your attachment.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Be with influential friends and hold back from associating with those who are greedy. Good time to decide what supplies you need for that home improvement.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Give a practically-minded acquaintance compliments for some good deed that person has done. Showing quiet affection for mate will bring much romantic happiness.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Make as many appointments for private conversations with good friends as you can; these will have fine results.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You need to stand on your own two feet in a business matter now and are capable of doing so. This is a day to use the trust and in dealing with a member of your family.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Information from a distance gives the answer to your business concerns.

An outside prominent associate can relieve some problems at your dwelling.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be off to new places with as many alert and wide-awake friends as possible. Use some money you and attachment have saved for some interesting journey.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Put your own special gifts now into any financial project. Show your attachment now that you are aware of your loved one's needs and put more life into the relationship.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Delays in business plans now give you a chance to perfect them. Show your affection for your mate now by some very practical gift or compliment.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) A brilliant friend has all sorts of good ideas to aid you with business and finances. Invite into your home only the persons you really like and enjoy.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Don't give up on gaining support in business of an influential person; you can finally attain it. Use that vitality you now feel to please your mate.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You abound in ideas for more success in money and practical chores. Home is now full of constructive activity and improvements.

THE Daily Crossword by Hank Harrington

ACROSS

- 1 Afghan city
- 2 Sagan
- 3 Edges
- 4 Modern Mode
- 5 Hodgepodge
- 6 Gr. theaters
- 7 Festivals
- 8 Onomatopoeic
- 9 Rites
- 10 Rites
- 11 Sky mysteries
- 12 Spooky
- 13 Certain group
- 14 Electricians
- 15 Coney
- 16 Stone width
- 17 A Star
- 18 Burning
- 19 Lowly worker
- 20 Vehicle
- 21 Concomitant
- 22 Ralph
- 23 Sp. gold
- 24 Municipal
- 25 Arduous
- 26 Journey
- 27 Rill
- 28 Soot
- 29 March date
- 30 Long partner
- 31 Study
- 32 Large weapon
- 33 Falls short
- 34 Residence
- 35 Oil lamp
- 36 Necessity
- 37 Blind part
- 38 Retreats
- 39 Apartment
- 40 Will name
- 41 Cathedral
- 42 City
- 43 Planting unit
- 44 Bike part
- 45 Seaboard hard
- 46 Entrance
- 47 Distinct
- 48 Obscure one
- 49 Spurred anew
- 50 Age
- 51 Election
- 52 Gen. Robt.
- 53 Humble
- 54 Knapsack
- 55 Oriental money
- 56 Performa
- 57 Query
- 58 Restaurants
- 59 Humble
- 60 Nick of movies
- 61 Spoiled
- 62 Small: prof.
- 63 Eng. county
- 64 TX city
- 65 "I" in the life
- 66 TV part
- 67 Spoiled
- 68 GI's address

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

ACROSS

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Can steroids make champions?

LONDON (AP) — Al Oerter says steroids are all in the mind. According to a British Broadcasting Corp. television programme being screened Wednesday, he may be right.

The BBC documentary says anabolic steroids may have a greater effect on the mind than the body of athletes trying to improve their performances.

The TV programme, titled "Oed: the steroid myth," presents evidence from the United States, Britain and Italy challenging the view that the physical effects of steroids can turn good athletes into world champions.

"The idea that steroids enhance performance may be another damaging myth," the programme concludes.

Oerter supports that theory. The four-time Olympic discus champion said that when he made his comeback at age 40 in 1976, he was given a steroid prescription to help him over an injury.

Because he had high blood pressure, the programme lasted just two months during which time, Oerter said, there was no noticeable improvement in his performance.

Yet seven years later, "clean" of drugs at age 44, he had one of the best throws of his career, 237 feet (72.2 metres).

"It's not the stuff you are shooting into your system," Oerter says in the BBC programme. "It's all mental."

But the programme left unanswered a number of key questions, including whether Ben Johnson could have won the 100 metres at the Seoul Olympics without being on steroids.

Johnson, stripped of his Olympic gold medal after testing positive for steroids, later testified he had been on a steroid programme since 1981.

Whether the Canadian would have triumphed without the help of steroids "is something we may never know for sure," the programme says.

At a press briefing Tuesday, the programmes producer, Chris Thau, said the muscle-building powers attributed to steroids could help certain athletes at certain times.

What the 30-minute programme, which took 1½ years to make, was trying to do, he said, was show that the mental impact of taking steroids was equally effective.

"It was not my brief to appraise it from a moral standpoint," said Thau, a former Romanian hammer thrower. "But there is reason to believe that what is gained in strength is not necessarily matched by power."

"I know how compulsive the winning urge can be. But what interested me is what actually happened to people on steroids. It's not like taking a pill. Everything has to be right."

The programme cites an ex-

periment at the university of New Mexico at Albuquerque where, for nine weeks, a group of male athletes underwent tests.

They were injected with a variety of treatments, including steroids and placebos — substances that have no medical effect and are used merely as a testing device.

The study used a so-called "double blind" format, meaning that neither the athletes nor the people administering the treatments knew who was getting a placebo and who was getting steroids.

According to the university's Dr. Douglas Crist, there was "no statistical significant change in body fat" and "no statistical significant change in muscular power" among those who received steroids.

Nevertheless, the athletes reported that they felt stronger.

The conclusion, Crist said, was that, while body composition appeared to be unchanged, "the perception athletes derived from the treatment... made them feel stronger."

David Jenkins, a San Diego-based Briton who was convicted a year ago of drug smuggling and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, said he was obsessed with taking part in the 1976 Montreal Olympics, but that they did not improve his performance.

The former European 400-metre champion, rated number one in the world in 1975, was interviewed in custody at Borom prison camp near Barstow, California.

"He failed while on drugs because his mind stopped him," Hemery said. "Drugs themselves do not make champions."

ACC sports federation

AMMAN (Petra) — Sports officials representing universities in the four-member Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) countries began in Amman Wednesday meetings designed to create a federation of sports for ACC universities in the four countries Egypt, Iraq, North Yemen and Jordan.

Addressing the opening meeting was Dr. Yousef Siyam, dean of the students department at the University of Jordan who underlined the importance of having a federation grouping sportsmen

and sportswomen from the universities of the four countries to boost sports programmes.

He called on the officials to make a study of sports activities and programmes scheduled for the coming two years and the training requirements and expertise needed for the creation of the new federation.

Taking part in the meetings are officials from the four Jordanian universities as well as universities from Egypt, North Yemen and Iraq.

REQUIRED HOUSE HELP

A family of four people requires house help, preferably from the Philippines.

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FLAT FOR RENT

Two bedrooms, salon, two bathrooms. Furnished or unfurnished. Location: Shmeisani, near Tyche Hotel.

Tel.: 678433.

DELUXE FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

Consisting of three bedrooms. Location 5th Circle, the road leading to Abdoun, after the traffic lights turn right then go to the 5th street on your left until you reach the crossroads. Monthly or annual rent or any period.

Please call 642072, 818092, 822942, from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 4-6 p.m.

DELUXE FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

Located in Sweifiah 6th Circle in a beautiful and quiet area. Consists of 4 bedrooms, big salon, dining room, living room, big kitchen, 3 bathrooms, storage, 2 glassed verandas, with telephone, garage, garden, central heating.

Please call 773269 - 773729 after 2 p.m.

FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

Deluxe furnished apartment, with 3 bedrooms, living room, dining room, private entrance. Location: Shmeisani, next to Marriott Hotel.

Tel.: 664406.

A FLAT FOR RENT

In Abdoun, 3 bedrooms, salon and sitting room, 2 bathrooms and kitchen. The space is 180 m².

Please call Tel: 624824 or 819850/Amman.

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN AND OMAR SHARIF

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ K84 ♠ QK5 ♠ J642 ♠ J83
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
2 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass
4 ♠ Pass ?
What do you bid now?
A.—For the moment, you have done all you can with your positive response. With no first-round control to show, be content with four spades. It is up to partner to make another move toward slam.

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ 74 ♠ J982 ♠ AKJ3 ♠ Q84
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
3 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?
A.—With 10 tricks, you have enough to redouble. However, what do you intend doing if your left-hand opponent bids two clubs or two hearts and that gets passed back to you? To avoid that dilemma, bid one no trump now, which shows a good balanced hand—exactly what you have.

Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ J82 ♠ KQ765 ♠ J852 ♠ J53
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?
A.—You have the values for one forward-going bid, and you have taken it. Pass. To rebid two hearts, you should have a six-card suit since partner, who has already shown two suits, rates to be short in hearts.

Q.4—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ J82 ♠ KQ765 ♠ J852 ♠ J53
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?
What do you bid now?
A.—The same conditions apply as above. However, you must bid two clubs. You prefer partner's first suit by a wide margin, so tell him so. This is not a forward-going bid, just a correction.

Q.5—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ J82 ♠ KQ765 ♠ J852 ♠ J53
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?
What action do you take?
A.—We said in a previous answer that you should have a six-card suit to bid two hearts. However, you must think for yourself. This hand is likely to take three or four tricks with hearts as trumps, but nothing playing in any other strain. Bid two hearts. Partner's high cards will help your cause.

Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ J82 ♠ KQ765 ♠ J852 ♠ J53
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?
What do you bid now?
A.—This time you are easily worth another bid, and the choice is obvious. You have a four-card major suit, so go ahead and bid partner about it. Bid one spade.

FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT IN SUWEIFIEH

3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, modern kitchen, large living and guest area, 2 verandas and separate garage.

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VILLA WANTED

Fully furnished deluxe villa wanted by an expatriate couple.

Requirements:
3 bedrooms or 2 bedrooms plus office, maid quarter, modern kitchen, large living room, dining room.

Preferred locations: Abdoun, Sewefiah or Um Uthainah.

Please call 664817 between 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

CENTRE CULTUREL FRANÇAIS

FRENCH CULTURAL CENTRE

Registration is now open at the French Cultural Centre for the following courses:

- French language courses for adults and children (all levels)
- Preparation courses for the exams at Sorbonne University (Paris)
- French for business
- Arabic language courses for foreigners
- Music courses (Piano — Flute — Guitar).

The registration will last until Sunday January 7, 1990 and the courses will start on Monday January 8 till March 25, 1990.

For more information, please contact the French Cultural Centre, Tel.: 637009, 636445, Amman.

Cinema Tel: 621555

RAINBOW

LICENCE TO KILL

Performances: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 677420

CONCORD

Rob Lowe... In

OXFORD BLUES

Performances: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema Tel: 634144

PHILADELPHIA

IRON ANGELS

Performances: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 675571

NILJUM

Rock Moranis... In

Honey, I Shrunk The Kids

Performances: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema Tel: 674111

PLAZA

LICENCE TO KILL

Performances: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30

Horse-jumping show

AMMAN (J.T.) — Under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein, and for the second successive year, the Queen Alia International Horse Jumping Championship will be held at the indoor riding school of the Arabian Horse Club. The event, which will take place on the afternoons of January 4 and 5 is sponsored by Hotel Jordan International.

This is the only international championship of its kind in the Arab World which is held indoors. Participants this year will include the Syrian national team and a rider from Saudi Arabia, by invitation of the Jordanian Equestrian Federation and the National Equestrian Committee.

This showjumping championship is now established as one of the most important charity events organised by the Jordanian Equestrian Federation, and proceeds will be donated to the Jordan Handicapped Sports Federation.

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Furnished or Unfurnished

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For more information please call Wael Real Estate Tel: 685342, 682097

WE HAVE MOVED

The manager of the

Lulua Spinning & Weaving Factory

announces that the plant's new management has moved from the Tower Building to the Housing Bank Complex, seventh floor, with following telephone numbers: 690795, 690785.



AMMAN BACCALAUREATE SCHOOL

Invites applications for the following positions for August 1990

Junior School (grades 1-5)
— Deputy head, to take charge of the English medium programme (includes English language and other subjects taught in English)
— English teachers (grades 3-5), to teach English and other subjects in English.

Senior School (grades 6-12) — Teachers of:
— Arabic, to teach Ministry of Education programme, GCE and International Baccalaureate courses
— English language and literature — throughout Senior School, including IGCSE and IB courses
— History in English, for IGCSE and IB
— Geography in English — to introduce the subject for IGCSE and IB

Suitably qualified and experienced applicants may be considered for the position of Head of Social Studies

Bilingual or English-speaking teachers of:
— Mathematics, including IGCSE and IB
— Computing, including IGCSE and IB
— Craft, design and technology
— Head or deputy head of Science and Technology Department, to teach physics, chemistry or biology for IGCSE and IB and to run a department of 12 staff.

Whole School (KG — grade 12)
Head of Music Department — Familiarity with Western music is required and knowledge of Arabic music is an advantage. An energetic practical musician is required to lead the continuing development of class, instrumental and choral work, and possibly to introduce Music IGCSE.

Scholarship for Arabic teacher
The school is offering a scholarship for two years funded postgraduate study in Britain within the area of Arabic language and literature or Islamic studies. The successful applicant will be required to undertake limited teaching to 'A' level in England, and to teach for 2 years full time at ABS on return.
IGCSE — approximates to GCE 'O' level
IB (International Baccalaureate) — approximates to freshman/GCE 'A' level standard.

Application forms may be collected from the school, and should be returned by Sunday 7th January 1990.

Modrow vows to keep parties informed about national affairs

EAST BERLIN (AP) — The interim government of Communist Premier Hans Modrow promised Wednesday to keep political opponents better informed about national affairs and to consult with pro-democracy forces before making important decisions.

Modrow's effort to appease disgruntled leaders of the New Forum reform movement stalled off collapse of the negotiations aimed at guiding East Germany through the troubled and uncertain period before free elections.

East Germans go to the polls on May 6 for the first competitive elections in the nation's 40-year history. A new 500-member parliament will be elected, which in turn will select a new government.

Because opposition forces view Modrow's Communist-dominated cabinet as transitional, they contend its powers are limited and that decisions affecting important areas of national policy should take the views of grassroots reform movements into consideration.

Modrow sent Deputy Premier and Economics Minister Christa Luff to Wednesday's session of the negotiations to assure the nearly 20 political parties and citizens' movements represented there that they would be consulted regularly through May 6.

In an apparent gesture of good faith, Ms. Luff gave a detailed and gloomy account of the national economy, disclosing that East Germany carries a foreign

debt of \$20.6 billion.

That makes the per capita indebtedness of East Germans higher than in Poland. But West German economic experts, who had previously disclosed the foreign debt figure, say East Germany's overall economic profile is much better than that of Poland or Hungary — two other Eastern European nations struggling through the tough transition from socialism to democracy.

Modrow Tuesday invited representatives to the talks to form an advisory committee to work with his government.

New Forum leaders had been threatening to withdraw from the talks, which Modrow warned could damage the political atmosphere as the nation prepares for the elections.

"If we do not succeed in building a climate of mutual trust, we will not have the proper climate for the May 6 elections, either," the East German News Agency (ADN) quoted him as saying.

The date for elections was determined on Dec. 7 at the first meeting of the groups involved in the talks.

The talks bring together lead-

ers of the Communist Party and more than a dozen other political parties and citizens groups to prepare draft legislation, constitutional reforms and other proposed changes.

Reinhard Schmitz of the East Berlin chapter of New Forum, which claims 200,000 members nationwide, complained at a press conference late Tuesday that Modrow's cabinet has failed to keep the activists informed about ecological, political and financial matters.

The group has specifically complained about East German officials' agreement to work with West German firms to improve nuclear power plant operations and output.

Also Tuesday, East Berlin reform activists were invited to work together with the Czechoslovak reform forces. Prague's newly named head of state, President Vaclav Havel, called for solidarity among the pro-democracy forces during his brief visit to East Germany and West Germany.

Czechoslovakia is undergoing a reform process with many similarities to the East German developments, and Havel suggested the two nations could learn from each other's experiences.

Meanwhile in Hamburg, West Germany, East German President Manfred Gerlach was quoted Tuesday as saying the Berlin Wall is "superfluous" and will eventually be dismantled.

East German officials have previously suggested that the barrier would be retained, at least in part, to prevent smuggling and the spread of drugs, the AIDS virus and other social problems.

"We are tearing down the wall," the mass-circulation Bild newspaper quoted Gerlach as saying in a report to be published in its Wednesday edition.

The newspaper distributed a report on the article to news agencies ahead of publication.

"It is superfluous," Gerlach said of the wall, according to Bild. "It will be replaced with normal border markings."

Gerlach said he could not predict when the wall, erected in 1961 to stem an exodus of East German workers to the West, would be taken down.

Havel told reporters at a press conference earlier Tuesday that Gerlach had said the dismantling of the wall had already begun, referring to the more than two dozen crossings punched through the symbol of repression over the past two months.

East Germany lifted travel restrictions for its citizens on Nov. 9, unleashing a joyous rush by millions to the West for visits and celebrations that turned the divided city into a rolling street party for days.

A new crossing near the historic Brandenburg Gate was opened two days before Christmas, which facilitated the first joint New Year's celebration in 40 years.

Romanian soldier hit by snipers; 60 Ceausescu associates arrested

BUCHAREST (AP) — A soldier was seriously wounded by sniper fire overnight, doctors said Wednesday, a sign of remaining pockets of resistance to the forces that toppled Dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

The soldier was admitted to Bucharest Emergency Hospital with a head wound. Doctors treating him described the soldier's condition as "very serious" but released no further details.

The attack indicated there was still some resistance in the capital from members of Ceausescu's hated Securitate police.

Hundreds of die-hard agents from the disbanded security force are still believed armed and at large in Romania.

Until only days ago, their snipers attacked soldiers defending the uprising that ended Ceausescu's 24-year reign two weeks ago.

Otherwise, Bucharest was quiet Wednesday, as the capital slowly came to life after two days of New Year's festivities.

About 60 close associates of Ceausescu have been arrested, and the new leadership pledged to punish all who committed crimes against the people, the interim government said.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Constantin Gîrbea Tuesday told a news conference that all the executive members of the Communist Party politburo were in prison.

"I estimate there are about 60 ... all close colleagues of Ceausescu," said Gîrbea. "All evildoers from the old regime will be brought to justice." He also promised that judgment would follow for "all members of the Ceausescu family," but said the Defence Ministry would announce further details of the punishments to be meted out later.

Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, the country's second most powerful person, were summarily tried and executed on Dec. 25 on charges of genocide and other crimes.

Where and whether the Ceausescus have been buried has not been officially disclosed.

The Ceausescu's youngest son, Nicu, and only daughter, Zoia, were both captured in the early days of the violent uprising that claimed thousands of lives.

About 40 Ceausescu relatives are thought to have occupied ranking government posts before the revolution. Ceausescu was one of nine children, all of whom had families.

Tanjug said the Bucharest newspaper Romania Libera, reporting on the Ceausescus' excesses, had found that Ceausescu's obsession with being photographed cost the country at least \$28 million during his rule.

The Romanian press also said Ceausescu had sold 80 tons of gold from the state reserves to pay the country's \$10-billion foreign debt.

The final number of people killed in Romania's bloody, two-week uprising was still unclear.

New Philippine cabinet sworn in

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — President Corason Aquino swore in nine new cabinet members Wednesday and called for teamwork to solve the nation's problems in the wake of last month's bloody coup attempt.

Using emergency powers, Mrs. Aquino later ordered that all firearms be registered anew.

Meanwhile, opposition Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile denied allegations that he was linked to the Dec. 29 coup attempt. He called the charges a witchhunt aimed at eliminating Mrs. Aquino's opponents.

Congress also expanded the powers of a commission investigating the coup attempt, giving it the right, among other things, to look into bank accounts of suspected coup supporters.

A consolidated version of bills from the senate and house of representatives creating the commission was passed in both chambers, called into special session by Mrs. Aquino to approve the legislation.

Sen. Jose Lina, chairman of the senate negotiators for the final version, said the commission would investigate last month's attempted coup and recommend "measures which will prevent similar attempts at a violent seizure of power."

The bill gives the commission quasi-judicial powers, including the right to grant immunity from prosecution to witnesses. It protects witnesses against self-incrimination in testimony they are forced to give before the commission.

It also allows the commission to require the monetary board to disclose information or grant authority to examine bank accounts if it has "reasonable ground" to believe the funds were used in the coup attempt.

In ordering new gun registration, Mrs. Aquino also directed the armed forces to conduct an inventory of all their firearms, explosives, ammunition and other military equipment, including those on loan to civilians.

A law granting the president emergency powers, lasting until July, allows Mrs. Aquino to issue orders to recover firearms allegedly used in the military rebellion, but congress has requested her to seek court warrants.

2 nuns killed in Nicaragua ambush

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP) — The government is blaming rebels for killing two nuns and wounding a bishop and a third nun in an ambush in Nicaragua's remote Caribbean coastal region.

The bishop says their pickup truck was attacked, but he doesn't know who was responsible.

Sister Maureen Courtney, 42, of the United States and Sister Teresa Rosales of Nicaragua were killed in the attack Monday night, according to church officials.

Bishop Pablo Schmitz of the United States, who was shot in the arm, said Tuesday night that an explosion and heavy shooting blasted the pickup carrying the Roman Catholic Church workers to a meeting in north eastern Nicaragua.

But Schmitz said it was dark and he couldn't tell the attackers' identity or affiliation.

"I only know that a mine went off or a grenade and there was heavy shooting afterward," said Schmitz, 46.

The leftist Sandinista government blamed U.S.-backed rebels, known as contras, but other church officials said they didn't know who was responsible.

Schmitz, the auxiliary bishop of Bluefields, said the group was ambushed Monday afternoon in a place called Ojo de Agua, outside the town of Rosita 400 kilometres north east of Managua in the north eastern province of Zelaya.

An isolated area with few roads, north eastern Nicaragua is a stronghold of the Miskito Indians and an autonomous part of the contra resistance. Bluefields, Nicaragua's main Caribbean Port, is about 160 kilometres south of Puerto Cabezas.

Church officials said the workers were driving through the remote region in a white pickup with yellow crosses painted on the sides.

Schmitz said the group had gone from Puerto Cabezas to the town of Siuna, but were ambushed as they drove on the Rosita for a meeting.

Traveling in a convoy with them was Bishop Salvador Schläpfer, who stayed behind in Siuna, he said.

Asked if the attackers were rebels, Schmitz said he didn't know because "it was very dark outside."

Alaska volcano erupts again

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Airline flights were cancelled and residents marvelled at a spectacular light show, as Redoubt Volcano shot ash into the sky in its biggest eruption since waking from a 25-year sleep.

The Alaska Volcano Observatory said the eruption shortly before 6 p.m. Tuesday (0300 GMT Wednesday) was Redoubt's biggest since seismic activity began on Dec. 13.

Pilots reported a plume as high as 40,000 feet (12,200 metres) and said lava appeared to be flowing down the volcano's north west flank 185 kilometres south west of Anchorage, observatory scientists said.

A radio station near Kenai, across Cook Inlet from the volcano, was swamped with calls from people who saw lights in the sky.

"We've had listeners on the air reporting what looked like heated, falling stones," said John Davis of station KSRM. He said people parked their cars near inlet beaches to watch the display.

Azeri riots reach Soviet-Iran border

MOSCOW (R) — Three days of riots along the Soviet-Iranian border have roused speculation that militant Muslim nationalists in the southern Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan may seek closer ties with Iran.

A brief report by the Soviet News Agency TASS late Tuesday said crowds, stirred up by "irresponsible elements," had wreaked havoc along more than 130 kilometres of the border since Sunday, attacking border posts and other installations and drawing complaints from the Iranian side.

The rioters, some allegedly drunk or on drugs, tried to set the border posts and other installations on fire, threatened guards and attempted to break through into Iran itself, said TASS.

It was a new twist to two years of spiralling nationalist violence in Azerbaijan, alongside the Caspian Sea. TASS put damage to border posts at several million roubles (dollars), but it did not make clear if there had been casualties.

"Iranian border officials protested against the actions of extremist elements," the agency said. "The officials asked the Soviet side to take measures to stop the rioting and prevent more serious consequences."

The violence, in a region called the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, was the first incident of its type in Azerbaijan, locked since early 1988 in a dispute with Armenia over the Azerbaijani region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Minutes earlier TASS had reported a seemingly unrelated attack on a convoy of Azerbaijani buses travelling through an Armenian-populated area in Nagorno-Karabakh, in which one person was killed and at least three were injured.

More than 120 people have died either in Azerbaijan or in Armenia in the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, which has a largely Armenian population and is claimed by Armenia.

However, passions aroused over Nagorno-Karabakh have also been channelled in recent months into an Azerbaijani Popular Front Movement, which combined a hardline position on Nagorno-Karabakh with demands for radical political change.

The front has increasingly challenged the republic's Communist Party leadership in the past few months and its members were behind anti-government riots in the city of Dzhalalabad Friday, 200 kilometres to the east.

Roh closes case against Chun

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — President Roh Tae-Woo, declaring "the case closed," appealed to the nation Wednesday to stop bickering over charges of alleged misconduct by disgraced former President Chun Doo-Hwan.

Roh issued a statement declaring that disputes over the former president's alleged wrongdoing during his seven-year rule had been resolved by Chun's daylong testimony in parliament Sunday.

"I know that some people are not satisfied with his testimony... But if there is more to be clarified, it should be left to history," Roh said on nationwide radio and television.

He said discussion of past issues is unproductive and must not be allowed to continue to split Korean society.

"I declare that I, as president responsible for all state affairs, will resolutely close the case regardless of who tries to make an issue of it," he said.

Roh said Chun's testimony fulfilled a "grand compromise" reached between him and opposition leaders on Dec. 15. As part of the compromise, two former generals who had served under Chun — Chung Ho-Yong and Lee Hui-Sung — resigned from politics.

There was no immediate opposition reaction to Roh's statement, but most ruling and opposition leaders had said earlier that Chun's unfinished testimony Sunday was not expected to become a major political issue.

Although the head of the big-

gest opposition party wanted perjury charges brought against Chun, all other major political parties contacted by the Associated Press indicated they would not make an issue of Chun's testimony.

Political leaders shared the view that the general public was angered by what it saw as Chun's failure to tell the truth when he testified, but also was tired of further discussion after nearly two years of bitter political wrangling over compelling Chun to testify.

"It's unfortunate that the testimony was incomplete, but the issue is over," said Rep. Park Hui-Tae, a spokesman for the governing Democratic Justice Party.

U.S. may withdraw some troops

Meanwhile the United States and South Korea are near an agreement to withdraw 5,000-6,000 U.S. soldiers from South Korea this year to meet U.S. congressional demands and defence budget cuts, the Yonhap News Agency reported Wednesday.

The national news service quoted unidentified Korean government sources as saying the two governments discussed restructuring the U.S. troop presence in South Korea, including reductions in its size, in connection with a bill sponsored by U.S. senators Sam Nunn and John Warner.

The U.S. 8th Army Headquarters in Seoul said it would have no comment on the report.

About 43,000 American troops, including the 2nd U.S. Infantry Division, are stationed in South Korea under a mutual defence pact. U.S. troops fought on the side of the South after Communist North Korea invaded to start the 1950-53 Korean war.

The congressional bill sponsored by Nunn and Warner requires the U.S. administration to report by April 1 measures to reorganise American forces in East Asia, including South Korea.

The report by the U.S. administration to Congress would be allowed to go to a third country as "speculation, pure and simple."

But the spokesman said Fang could plead guilty and "mend his ways," indicating there might be some way out of the diplomatic impasse which is seriously straining ties between Washington and Peking.

"The recent rumours about the question of Fang Lizhi and Li Shuxian (Fang's wife) floating around abroad are speculation, pure and simple," the spokesman said.

"We have repeatedly said that Fang Lizhi and Li Shuxian have violated the criminal law of China. The act of giving them refuge by the U.S. embassy in China is interference in China's internal affairs as well as a breach of the

China denies deal reached over dissident Fang

PEKING (R) — China Wednesday denied a deal had been reached with the United States to free leading dissident Fang Lizhi and his wife who are taking refuge in the American embassy in Peking.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman described reports that the couple would be allowed to go to a third country as "speculation, pure and simple."

But the spokesman said Fang could plead guilty and "mend his ways," indicating there might be some way out of the diplomatic impasse which is seriously straining ties between Washington and Peking.

"The recent rumours about the question of Fang Lizhi and Li Shuxian (Fang's wife) floating around abroad are speculation, pure and simple," the spokesman said.

"We have repeatedly said that Fang Lizhi and Li Shuxian have violated the criminal law of China. The act of giving them refuge by the U.S. embassy in China is interference in China's internal affairs as well as a breach of the

recognised norms of international law."

A Hong Kong magazine, Pao Shing, reported Tuesday that Fang would be allowed to leave the embassy where he has been sheltering since last June, when Chinese troops crushed pro-democracy protests in Peking.

It said a preliminary understanding was reached during the visit to Peking last month by U.S. National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, adding that Fang would be allowed to travel to Australia by the end of this month.

Australian officials have already denied they were involved in any deal to free Fang, an astrophysicist and China's most prominent dissident.

"It follows that this problem can only be solved according to the laws of China," the spokesman said.

"The United States on its part is obligated to work for its settlement. The only way out for Fang and Li is to plead guilty and mend their ways so as not to alienate themselves from the people."

The spokesman declined further comment.

China's education chief warned in a tough policy speech published Wednesday that Peking might retaliate for U.S. decisions to let Chinese students fearing persecution remain in the United States.

Li Tieying, head of the State Education Commission, also called for stricter political tests for Chinese students sent abroad and said some colleges would have to be merged or even closed.

His speech, carried on the front page of the People's Daily, was the latest in a string of hardline education policies laid down since the government smashed student-led demonstrations for democracy in June.

"The United States has violated a Sino-U.S. agreement on educational exchanges, and grossly interfered in our internal affairs," Li told members of China's parliament late last month and published for the first time Wednesday.

"We will be forced to take

necessary action (against the U.S. policy) at the appropriate time," he said.

He did not say specifically what steps might be taken but he hinted at tighter controls on determining which students were allowed to study abroad.

In November President George Bush vetoed a bill introduced by Congress that would have allowed all Chinese students in the United States to remain there even if their visas expired.

Despite his veto, Bush promised to grant extensions to students able to show they feared persecution on return to China. Congressional leaders were nevertheless angry and said they would override the veto when they returned from recess this month.

Since June China has arrested many university students who were involved in democracy protests, forced others into hiding and has tried to "purify" the rest with political indoctrination.

Many graduates have been sent to work in rural areas. Officials

COLUMN 8

Batman becomes biggest blockbuster

LOS ANGELES (AP) — North America's movie theatres reaped a record of more than \$5 billion at the box office in 1989, powered by the punch of Batman and other highly promoted action films. Despite a lacklustre Christmas holiday season, summertime moviegoers spun the turnstiles at such a dizzying pace that the box-office record of \$4.45 billion from 1988 was smashed, according to released figures.

The official box-office total was set by fewer films: 446 features made their debuts in 1989, down 13 per cent from the previous year, but the studio-by-studio race, Warner Bros. was no. 1 with an estimated 17.1 per cent share of all U.S. and Canadian tickets sold. The studio's Batman was the year's highest in ticket sales was the highest in history, Disney, with some analysts didn't expect to compete, finished fifth with a healthy 13.8 per cent share.

Although part of the revenue surge is attributable to higher ticket prices, admissions are projected to be greater than last year. In large part, the record year was propelled by expensive and heavily marketed star vehicles such as Batman, and Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, which made \$196 million and Lethal Weapon 2, which collected \$147 million, according to trade publications and private research firms. Right behind, the highly regarded Honey, I Shrunk the Kids emerged as 1989's no. 4 film with receipts of \$130 million.

It was followed by the 1988 holdover Rain Man \$127 million.

Deaf-mute gambling den smashed

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan police have uncovered a gambling den of deaf-mutes whose most important tool was a fax machine. Police in the central city of Hsinchu said Wednesday they had recently smashed the ring, made up of scores of deaf-mutes from all over the island. The club's organizer, also a deaf-mute, used a facsimile machine to communicate the details of each gambling session, where speculators would wager hefty stakes on the traditional Chinese game of Mahjong.

Police seized the club's fax machine and account books showing individual bets on games were as high as \$15,000. One man, accused of being the ring-leader, has been turned over to the courts for prosecution, police said.

3 sisters have 4 babies in 12 hours

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — When Ron Thompson sat down for lunch on New Year's Eve, he was the grandfather of five. At breakfast Monday, he was a grandfather of nine. Three of Thompson's daughters — Mary Tolson, Joan Thompson and Carol Thompson — gave birth to four boys at Seton Medical Centre late Sunday and early Monday. When Ms. Tolson went into labour Sunday, she asked her 19-year-old sister Joan, who was in the ninth month of her pregnancy, to drive her to the hospital. After about five hours, Ms. Tolson, 28, gave birth to Shane Taylor Tolson.

Seven hours later, Joan was hustled to Seton by sister Carol. Joan gave birth to Jeremy Andrew Thompson Armendariz a minute after midnight. Carol, 24, then went into labour and gave birth to twin boys just before 3 a.m. The mothers and four boys spent New Year's Day in good condition. "This beats partying," Joan said. "At least I have a (sense of) relief and not a headache."

Global weather (major world cities)

MMIL MAX

AMSTERDAM 05 32 04 39 Cloudy

ATHENS 05 41 10 50 Cloudy

BANGKOK 25 17 32 30 Clear

Buenos Aires 18 34 30 36 Clear

Cairo 13 55 22 72 Cloudy

CHICAGO 03 28 04 39 Rain

COPENHAGEN 04 25 01 30 Cloudy

FRANKFURT 01 30 01 30 Cloudy

GENEVA 02 28 02 36 Cloudy

HONG KONG 15 59 17 63 Cloudy

INDIANAPOLIS 01 30 05 43 Cloudy

LONDON 04 39 05 41 Cloudy

LOS ANGELES 08 48 17 62 Clear

MADRID 05 41 10 50 Cloudy

MELBOURNE 20 58 31 68 Cloudy

MONTREAL 02 28 03 37 Cloudy

MOSCOW 12 10 05 23 Clear

NEW DELHI 05 41 14 68 Cloudy

NEW YORK 01 30 07 44 Cloudy

PARIS 01 30 04 39 Cloudy

ROME 02 28 12 54 Clear

SYDNEY 10 66 30 98 Cloudy

VIENNA 02 28 01 34 Cloudy

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

58 killed in Sri Lankan clashes

COLOMBO (R) — At least 58 people were killed in clashes between two rival Tamil groups in Sri Lanka's northern Vavuniya district this week, security sources and residents said Wednesday. They said 55 men of an illegal Tamil militia were shot dead when fighters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam stormed their camp at Musakuthy. The Tigers lost three men in the fighting on Sunday and Monday, the sources said.

40 dead in Pakistan bridge collapse

LAHORE (AP) — About 40 people may have drowned when a bridge collapsed in north eastern Pakistan, plunging workmen and onlookers into a swift canal, officials said Wednesday. Fog hampered attempts to rescue survivors and recover bodies after the accident occurred Thursday night near the village of Hafizabad, about 80 kilometres northwest of Lahore, police said. Fog was still thick at daybreak Wednesday. Police abandoned a search along the banks and began stringing nets downstream.

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